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**Competition and Consumer Policy in Digital Markets – Note by France**

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## France

### Introduction

1. The rise of digital services has profoundly transformed consumption and competitive dynamics. By facilitating access to goods and services, digital platforms have reshaped consumers' purchasing habits and accelerated the growth of e-commerce. The evolution of online shopping illustrates these changes: in 2024, 77% of French consumers made at least one online purchase, compared with 17% in 2004 and 54% in 2014<sup>1</sup>. On average, each online shopper spends approximately €4,200 per year on internet purchases.

2. While this development has generated significant efficiency gains for consumers, it has also given rise to increasing challenges in both competition regulation and consumer protection, requiring closer coordination between these two regulatory fields. As Sarah Lacoche, Director General of the French Directorate General for Competition Policy, Consumer Affairs and Fraud Control (DGCCRF), noted in 2024, although the internet facilitates trade and exchanges, it also provides fertile ground for breaches of consumer protection and competition rules, characterized by the large-scale proliferation of fraud and abusive practices<sup>2</sup>.

3. In this context, many practices observed in digital markets simultaneously affect competition between operators and consumers' ability to make free and informed choices. Algorithmic pricing mechanisms, self-preferencing practices, dark patterns, certain user lock-in strategies, and the large-scale exploitation of personal data may therefore fall within the scope of both competition law and consumer protection law<sup>3</sup>. Similarly, the dissemination of fake reviews, the sale of non-compliant products through online platforms, and various misleading commercial practices may also create significant distortions of competition to the detriment of businesses that comply with the applicable rules.

4. These two policies have always been closely related, as already demonstrated by the French authorities in their contribution to the OECD roundtable in 2008<sup>4</sup>. Essential to public economic policy, they serve, in part, the same objectives, albeit in different ways. Competition policy aims to ensure that markets function in a sufficiently competitive manner by guaranteeing fair and balanced relations between businesses, so that consumers can purchase quality goods or services at the lowest prices. Consumer protection policy, on the other hand, aims to directly protect consumers by ensuring fair commercial practices and product safety, while enabling them to access fair, understandable, and accessible information<sup>5</sup>. These two policies therefore aim to protect and maximize consumer surplus.

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<sup>1</sup> [Cour des comptes, Consumer Protection in the Digital Age, Thematic Public Report, November 2025.](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Sarah Lacoche, "The Role and Priority Actions of the DGCCRF in Support of the Economy and Consumers," Concurrences, March 2024.](#)

<sup>3</sup> [DGCCRF Morning Briefings, "Algorithms, Pricing, and Consumer Manipulation," November 2024.](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Note from the French authorities, The Interface between Competition and Consumer Policies, 2008.](#)

<sup>5</sup> [DGCCRF, 2024 Activity Report and 2025 Outlook, 2025.](#)

5. The rise of digital markets is leading the authorities responsible for competition and consumer protection to strengthen their coordination to respond as effectively as possible to the new challenges that arise from them. A balanced regulatory framework appears indispensable to preserve the positive effects of this technological revolution while protecting the various economic actors. In this context, the Autorité de la concurrence (ADLC) and the DGCCRF are fully mobilised. In France, competition enforcement powers are shared between the two authorities, which maintain close and ongoing collaboration. In particular, the DGCCRF forwards to the ADLC the evidence and practices it detects, thanks to its local investigation network. The ADLC may then decide to take up these cases.

6. As a result, interactions between competition and consumer protection policies occur primarily within the DGCCRF itself. At the decentralized level, investigators conducting consumer protection inspections are often required to ask questions relating to potential competition law infringements. At the central level, the unit responsible for consumer affairs (Bureau 3A) and the unit responsible for competition matters (Bureau 3B) belong to the same directorate and regularly exchange information regarding their respective activities. In addition, experts from the DGCCRF's sectorial units (energy, digital markets, agri-food, healthcare, transport, etc.) are regularly required to work on both consumer protection and competition law matters, thereby fostering a cross-cutting exchange of expertise and knowledge.

7. This contribution first examines the impact of digital markets on competition and online consumer protection (Section 1). It then analyses the evolution of regulatory frameworks and enforcement practices designed to address these challenges (Section 2).

## 1. Digital markets are leading to a relative convergence between competition policy and consumer protection policy

### 1.1. Practices in digital markets simultaneously affect competitive market functioning and consumer autonomy

8. Over recent years, the French competition and consumer protection authorities have identified numerous practices in digital markets that may simultaneously affect competition between economic operators and consumer protection.

9. In this regard, dark patterns constitute a significant example. Since 2023, work carried out by the DGCCRF together with the Interministerial Directorate for Public Transformation (DITP), and subsequently with ARCOM<sup>6</sup> and the CNIL<sup>7</sup> following the adoption of the Digital Services Act (DSA), in order to fight against unfair commercial practices online has shown that these digital interfaces can steer, mislead, or manipulate consumers into making choices that are often not in their best interests<sup>8</sup>. These practices directly undermine consumer autonomy but may also reduce competition among firms, particularly in concentrated markets. In fact, dark patterns may limit consumers' ability to identify the lowest-priced offer, leading them towards preselected or default options. Consumers may consequently become locked into an existing service, while switching

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<sup>6</sup> Autorité de régulation de la communication audiovisuelle et numérique, which is the French independent public authority guaranteeing freedom of communication.

<sup>7</sup> Commission nationale de l'informatique et des libertés ("CNIL"), which is the French independent administrative authority responsible for personal data protection.

<sup>8</sup> [DGCCRF, DITP, diagnostic report, combating unfair online practices, 2023.](#)

costs are reinforced. Firms relying on such practices may collect more data, increase sales, and gain an artificial competitive advantage over competitors that do not engage in similar conduct. Competition is therefore no longer based on merit, but rather on the manipulation of consumer behaviour. Consumers are no longer able to select the best available offer, which harms both the effective functioning of competition and consumer welfare.

10. The protection of personal data constitutes another important point of convergence between competition and consumer protection policies. Growing consumer concerns regarding the collection and use of personal data has led competition authorities and data protection authorities to recognize that the level of personal data protection may constitute a genuine parameter of competition. Several studies have shown that, under certain conditions and all other parameters being equal, users tend to prefer services offering a higher level of personal data protection<sup>9</sup>.

11. In its [Opinion No. 18-A-03 of 6 March 2018 on data exploitation in the online advertising sector](#), the French Competition Authority notably recognized that “*the legal framework for the protection of personal data and privacy and the conditions under which these rules are implemented by firms are key aspects in how competition on the market works*”<sup>10</sup>. In its [Decision 22-D-12 of 16 June 2022 regarding practices implemented in the online advertising sector](#), the Authority reaffirmed the importance of personal data protection in the competitive assessment of digital markets, stating that “*Social media platforms compete for users' attention through a combination of parameters including: size and type of user network, content, innovative features, Ad load and quality of advertising, privacy, platform 'governance', and price*”<sup>11</sup>. Compliance with personal data protection rules is therefore not only a matter of consumer protection. It also constitutes a key parameter shaping competition insofar as it directly influences consumer preferences and choices<sup>12</sup>. Competition assessments may therefore take into account considerations arising from consumer protection or data protection law to better understand market dynamics<sup>13</sup>.

12. Finally, the large-scale exploitation of personal data has fostered the development of algorithmic pricing mechanisms, which also illustrate the convergence between competition and consumer protection concerns<sup>14</sup>. These systems, often based on artificial intelligence models, allow prices to be adjusted according to consumers' behaviour, purchase histories, or estimated willingness to pay. They reinforce information asymmetries between firms and consumers and may lead to forms of price discrimination that are detrimental to consumer welfare. The ability of such algorithms to react instantaneously to market signals may also facilitate forms of tacit coordination between

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<sup>9</sup> Tsai, Janice Y., Egelman, Serge, Cranor, Lorrie and Acquisti, Alessandro, 2011, “The Effect of Online Privacy Information on Purchasing Behavior: An Experimental Study”, *Information Systems Research*, 22(2), 254-268. Voir aussi [CNIL, The French and Personal Data Protection, 2018](#), and [CNIL, The French and Cookie Regulations, 2020](#).

<sup>10</sup> [ADLC, Opinion No. 18-A-03 of March 6, 2018, on the use of data in the online advertising sector, § 71, 2018](#).

<sup>11</sup> [ADLC, Decision No. 22-D-12 of June 16, 2022, regarding practices in the online advertising sector, § 247, 2022](#).

<sup>12</sup> See, [ADLC, Opinion No. 23-A-20 of December 4, 2023, regarding the CNIL's draft recommendation on mobile applications](#).

<sup>13</sup> [CNIL, Findings of the Study Group on the Relationship Between Data Protection and Competition, 2024](#).

<sup>14</sup> [OCDE, Algorithmic pricing and competition in G7 jurisdictions, 2025](#).

firms, leading to price stabilization or alignment of behaviours even in the absence of any explicit agreement. Such practices may therefore simultaneously raise concerns under competition law and consumer protection law. French authorities have been actively engaged in addressing these issues. In 2024, for example, the DGCCRF organized an event entitled “Algorithms, Pricing and Consumer Manipulation: Challenges for Competition and Consumer Protection”, which examined the potential competition and consumer protection concerns arising from the use of such algorithms<sup>15</sup>. Similarly, in 2019, the French Competition Authority and the Bundeskartellamt conducted a joint study on algorithms and competition, highlighting the extent to which such systems may facilitate collusive behaviour, even in the absence of explicit agreements between firms<sup>16</sup>. The study also examined the impact of these algorithms on consumer welfare.

13. Nevertheless, the synergies between competition policy and consumer protection policy remain limited in digital markets. Certain situations illustrate that competition rules and consumer protection rules continue to pursue distinct and autonomous objectives, which therefore require careful coordination and balancing.

## 1.2. Certain practices may lead to tensions between consumer protection and competition regulation and require coordination between these two policies

14. In certain situations, the objectives pursued by competition policy and consumer protection policy may appear to conflict in digital markets. This may be the case, for example, with regard to the protection of consumers’ personal data. While the implementation of stricter regulation in this area is beneficial to consumer welfare, it can also affect competitive dynamics. In fact, regulatory requirements regarding personal data protection entail significant compliance costs, which large companies, benefiting from economies of scale, can absorb more easily than smaller companies. These costs can act as a barrier to entry or to growth for smaller operators. Furthermore, the advantages derived from data processing appear to be much higher in a “logged-in” environment, i.e. accessible via a personal account created by the user after accepting terms and conditions and a data policy, than for freely accessible websites or applications (where the user directly selects which data processing they consent to).

15. This results in a risk of consolidation of dominant operators’ positions, which may reduce competitive intensity in the relevant markets. The Commission nationale de l’informatique et des libertés (“CNIL”), the French independent administrative authority responsible for personal data protection, has itself acknowledged on several occasions that the cost of personal data protection is proportionally less burdensome for large companies<sup>17</sup>. The CNIL has therefore expressed its intention to “*actively compensate for this tendency through a strict policy towards large players*”<sup>18</sup>. Thus, a policy designed to strengthen consumer protection may, in practice, contribute to restricting competitive intensity in certain markets, which necessitates a balancing exercise between the two policies.

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<sup>15</sup> [DGCCRF, Morning Briefings, “Algorithms, Pricing, and Consumer Manipulation,” November 2024.](#)

<sup>16</sup> [ADLC and Bundeskartellamt, Study on Algorithms and Competition, November 2019.](#)

<sup>17</sup> [CNIL, Findings of the Study Group on the Relationship Between Data Protection and Competition, 2024.](#)

<sup>18</sup> [CNIL, The Economic Impact of the GDPR, 5 Years Later, 2024.](#)

16. Furthermore, the Autorité de la concurrence has already had to conciliate personal data protection requirements with competition law in its [Decision 25-D-02 of March 31, 2025, concerning practices implemented in the mobile app advertising sector on iOS devices](#)<sup>19</sup>. This decision follows a complaint filed by various associations and publishers of online content and services regarding practices implemented by Apple when it introduced the App Tracking Transparency (“ATT”) feature, which was launched in France in April 2021. ATT is a pop-up window displayed in the App Store that seeks users’ consent for the collection of their data by third-party apps (other than those pre-installed by Apple on its devices). The ADLC ruled on a request for urgent interim measures and, while it did not issue an emergency order, decided to continue a further investigation, which led to the decision of March 31, 2025<sup>20</sup>.

17. In theory, the ATT framework pursued a legitimate consumer protection objective. By requiring explicit user consent before any collection of their data for advertising purposes by third-party applications, it aimed to strengthen users’ control over their personal data and to improve the transparency of targeted advertising practices. This protective purpose is acknowledged by the ADLC itself, which underlines that the introduction by a dominant gatekeeper platform of measures reinforcing, beyond the rules imposed by regulation, the protection of personal data and the effectiveness of user consent is “*a priori, legitimate and does not, in principle, raise any objections under competition rules*”<sup>21</sup>.

18. However, the ADLC found that the design and implementation of ATT were neither necessary nor proportionate to achieve the privacy protection objectives pursued by Apple. Therefore, the ADLC concluded that the concrete implementation modalities of this framework were abusive within the meaning of competition law. In practice, the framework imposed a second consent prompt on third-party publishers and excessively complicated the user journey. This more rigorous treatment did not apply under the same conditions to Apple’s own applications, creating an asymmetry of treatment to the detriment of third-party publishers, particularly smaller ones.

19. In its decision, the Authority fined Apple €150 million for these practices. This case illustrates the tensions that can arise in digital markets between consumer protection objectives and the preservation of effective competition. While the protection of personal data is indeed a legitimate consumer protection objective, the manner in which it is implemented by a platform with significant market power can produce significant anti-competitive effects when it is disproportionate to the achievement of that objective or lacks objective justification.

20. Thus, while competition and consumer protection policies tend to converge on digital markets, their articulation is not always straightforward and sometimes requires the authorities to engage in a balancing exercise. Accordingly, to effectively address these new challenges and conciliate these objectives, which may sometimes appear contradictory, regulators have been driven to adapt their legal instruments and working methods.

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<sup>19</sup> [ADLC, Decision 25-D-02 of March 31, 2025, concerning practices implemented in the mobile app advertising sector on iOS devices.](#)

<sup>20</sup> [ADLC, decision 21-D-07 of March 17, 2021, regarding a request for interim measures in the mobile app advertising sector on iOS.](#)

<sup>21</sup> [ADLC, Decision 25-D-02 of March 31, 2025, concerning practices implemented in the mobile app advertising sector on iOS devices, §498, 2025.](#)

## 2. The need to adapt regulatory instruments and practices to address the challenges identified in digital markets

### 2.1. European and French regulations are constantly evolving to adapt to the various practices in digital markets

21. The regulatory framework at the European and French levels has gradually evolved to enable the DGCCRF and the ADLC to acquire the appropriate tools in order to better monitor simultaneous violations of consumer and competition law in online markets. This evolution relies both on the mobilization of existing national tools and on the integration of new European instruments specifically designed to address the specific characteristics of digital markets.

22. With regard to online consumer protection, France has introduced, under [article L. 521-3-1 of the consumer code](#), a digital requisition mechanism to prevent manifestly unlawful content. Stemming from the transposition of several European regulations<sup>22</sup> and implemented by the DDADUE law of 3 December 2020<sup>23</sup>, this tool enables the DGCCRF, following an injunction that has remained without effect or where the responsible party could not be identified, to order the display of a warning message, the de-referencing of a website, or the blocking of its internet domain name. The DGCCRF used this power in the Wish case in November 2021, following the marketing of dangerous products, which illustrates its capacity to directly protect consumers online<sup>24</sup>. In 2025, 135 digital requisitions were issued, demonstrating the regular use of this tool by investigative services<sup>25</sup>.

23. Furthermore, the European framework, embodied by the Digital Services Act (DSA), appears to complement existing French law. In this context, the DGCCRF is responsible for ensuring compliance with the obligations imposed on online marketplaces regarding the traceability of professional sellers which ensure that product and service listings include the necessary information, and for informing consumers who have purchased a non-compliant or illegal product. These obligations, while falling under the scope of consumer protection, also have direct effects on the competitive functioning of markets by reducing information asymmetries and limiting competitive advantages derived from deceptive or unfair practices.

24. The DGCCRF, in connection with the application of the DSA<sup>26</sup>, is also in charge of ensuring compliance with the prohibition on "dark patterns" in the design of online interfaces, also referred to as online choice architecture, as provided for in Article 25 of the regulation. The DGCCRF also sanctions this type of practice through the application of

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<sup>22</sup> Regulation 2017/2394 of December 17, 2017, on cooperation between national authorities in the field of consumer protection (Art. 9), Regulation 2017/625 of March 15, 2017, on compliance with European rules on the agri-food chain (Art. 138), and Regulation 2019/1020 of June 20, 2019, establishing a European network for market surveillance and the conformity of non-food products (Arts. 14–16).

<sup>23</sup> [Law n° 2020-1508 of December 3, 2020, containing various provisions for alignment with European Union law in economic and financial matters.](#)

<sup>24</sup> [DGCCRF, Consumer Protection: Heavy Fine Imposed on the Online Marketplace Wish, 2021.](#)

<sup>25</sup> [DGCCRF, 2025 Annual Report, 2026.](#)

<sup>26</sup> Regulation (EU) 2022/2065 on a Single Market for Digital Services and amending Directive 2000/31/EC.

national law in the context of unfair commercial practices, prohibited by [article L.121-1 of the consumer code](#). The prohibited practices include in particular those that are "*likely to materially distort the economic behaviour of an average consumer who is reasonably well-informed and reasonably careful and wise with regard to a product or service*".

25. The French so-called "Influencers" law of 9 June 2023 represents an important step in the legal framework governing commercial influence<sup>27</sup>, which emerged with the rise of social media. This law pursues primarily a consumer protection objective. It clarifies the legal status of influencers and influencer agents, strengthens the transparency obligations applicable to sponsored content, and prohibits certain commercial practices deemed particularly risky or misleading. This includes, in particular, the promotion of certain high-risk financial products, medical or cosmetic procedures, and illegal goods and services. The text also consolidates the obligations arising from consumer law relating to misleading commercial practices and disguised advertising, by requiring the explicit identification of commercial collaborations ("advertisement," "commercial collaboration," etc.).

26. Following the adoption of this law, the activities of the DGCCRF have significantly intensified. If the DGCCRF has been investigating the practices of influencers and influencer agencies for several years, it has been given additional tools and greater visibility with the 2023 legislative framework.

27. The DGCCRF has thus stepped up its enforcement operations and corrective or punitive measures, while also developing educational initiatives towards content creators and agencies. This approach reflects the government's commitment to professionalize the commercial influence sector and to increase the accountability of operators in the digital ecosystem.

28. This issue has also been examined from a competitive and structural perspective, as illustrated by [Opinion 26-A-02 of the French Competition Authority regarding content creators on digital platforms](#)<sup>28</sup>. This opinion highlights several imbalances that could affect the sector's competitive functioning: creators' economic dependence on platforms, the opacity of recommendation algorithms, information asymmetries in the relationships with intermediaries, and difficulties in accessing audience data.

29. The ADLC makes several recommendations aimed at improving the transparency and fairness of the digital ecosystem, particularly regarding content ranking criteria, access to performance statistics, and contractual relationships between platforms, agencies, and creators.

30. With regard to competition law, adaptation to digital markets has also been reflected in a greater mobilisation of existing instruments. By way of example, in the area of restrictive competition practices, the Minister of Economy may bring proceedings against a company before the commercial court in the event of a significant imbalance in commercial relationships. The DGCCRF's services have regularly relied on these provisions to regulate the practices of digital platforms. Thus, in September 2019, Amazon was ordered to pay a fine of €4 million on the basis of [article L. 442-1 of the commercial](#)

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<sup>27</sup> [DGCCRF, Business Practices of Digital Platforms: The Paris Commercial Court Sanctions Amazon, 2019.](#)

<sup>28</sup> [ADLC, Opinion 26-A-02 of the French Competition Authority regarding content creators on digital platforms](#)

[code](#), due to contractual clauses creating a significant imbalance to the detriment of businesses using its platform<sup>29</sup>.

31. The entry into force of the DMA<sup>30</sup> has broadened the scope of intervention of the French authorities. The law aimed at securing and regulating the digital space<sup>31</sup> (*loi visant à sécuriser et à réguler l'espace numérique*) of 21 May 2024 designated the DGCCRF, alongside the ADLC, as the competent national authority responsible for enforcing the DMA rules. The DGCCRF enforces, under the restrictive competition practices provided for in [article L. 442-1 of the commercial code](#), “national competition rules prohibiting other forms of unilateral conduct, to the extent that they apply to undertakings other than access controllers or amount to imposing additional obligations on access controllers.” The DGCCRF may also, at the Commission’s request, assist the Commission in the context of European investigations. Furthermore, it has the authority to initiate, on its own initiative and in coordination with the Commission, investigations into potential non-compliance with the Regulation, either when the Commission does not itself open an investigation or in support of such investigations.

32. While these developments constitute major progress, the overall coherence of the regulatory framework remains open to improvement. The coexistence of multiple definitions of dark patterns across European texts illustrates, for example, the difficulties of harmonisation. In this context, the ongoing work on the Digital Fairness Act should help to strengthen the clarity and consistency of the applicable rules.

33. To identify and monitor these new practices, the DGCCRF, the ADLC, and the other sectoral regulatory authorities have reaffirmed the need to adapt their tools and internal organisation.

## **2.2. The practices identified in digital markets have led regulators to adapt their methods and strengthen their cooperation**

34. Beyond the evolution of the regulatory framework, regulators also need to adapt their practices and develop new expertise to address the challenges identified in digital markets. Market surveillance requires competencies in both competition and consumer law, for which DGCCRF investigators are trained. For example, in the context of consumer law investigations, investigators are required to ask companies 8 questions related to potential breaches of competition law to assess the market situation. It is therefore possible to detect breaches of both competition law and consumer law in the course of an investigation that initially focused on only one of the two subjects.

35. The French authorities have also developed specific tools to fight against practices that are harmful to consumers and competition in digital markets. The DGCCRF launched in 2020 the SignalConso platform, which enables any consumer to directly report a problem with a professional. Since its creation, more than 1.7 million reports have been recorded, more than half of which concern online purchases, illustrating the need to strengthen the existing regulatory framework<sup>32</sup>. This tool enables the authorities to target their

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<sup>29</sup> [DGCCRF, Business Practices of Digital Platforms: The Paris Commercial Court Sanctions Amazon, 2019.](#)

<sup>30</sup> Regulation 2022/1925 of 14 September 2022 on contestable and fair markets in the digital sector and amending Directives (EU) 2019/1937 and (EU) 2020/1828

<sup>31</sup> [Law n° 2024-449 of May 21, 2024, aimed at securing and regulating the digital space.](#)

<sup>32</sup> [DGCCRF, Strategic Plan 2025–2028, February 2025.](#)

investigations on the most problematic sectors and to anticipate regulatory challenges. The DGCCRF also makes available to consumers numerous practical information sheets on its website in order to raise awareness on various consumer and competition topics in digital markets, such as dark patterns<sup>33</sup>, hidden subscriptions<sup>34</sup>, online purchases<sup>35</sup>, and commercial influence<sup>36</sup>. This allows consumers to understand these various concepts and to adapt their behaviour in order to protect themselves from their harmful effects.

36. The DGCCRF also conducted a joint behavioural study with the DITP in 2021 to improve consumer protection against online purchase fraud. This study, based on a phishing experiment aimed at detecting manipulative practices commonly used to mislead consumers, revealed that dark patterns had trapped 2,542 consumers. These consumers had purchased a fake coffee machine following an advertisement on Facebook, resulting in a total financial loss of several hundred thousand euros<sup>37</sup>. Building on this work, the DGCCRF and the DITP jointly developed a taxonomy of dark patterns identifying three main categories of unfair online practices<sup>38</sup>, thereby enabling investigators to better legally define these harmful digital behaviours detrimental to consumers and competition.

37. Beyond the tools made available to consumers, the competition and consumer protection authorities have strengthened their collaboration with the sectoral authorities in charge of digital regulation. The ADLC and the CNIL signed in December 2023 a joint declaration entitled "Competition and Personal Data: A Common Ambition," formalising their cooperation on issues at the intersection of competition law and personal data protection<sup>39</sup>. This collaboration aims in particular to improve consumers' understanding of digital services and to deepen dialogue between authorities. This collaboration has produced concrete results, for example, in the Apple ATT case where the CNIL issued two opinions at the ADLC's request in order to inform its competition analysis.

38. In the same vein, the DGCCRF and the CNIL signed a new cooperation agreement in November 2024, updating the original 2011 agreement, to enhance the exchange of information regarding violations of consumer law and personal data protection, share analyses of applicable legislation, pool expertise on investigative tools and techniques, and organize cross-training sessions to increase understanding of the specific challenges faced by each authority<sup>40</sup>.

39. To enforce these various regulations, the DGCCRF and the French Competition Authority have also adapted their internal structures and developed new areas of expertise. For example, the DGCCRF has established a digital unit within its national investigations department to detect new anti-competitive practices as well as violations of consumer law related to the rise of digital technology and AI. These new capabilities are deployed to serve both consumer protection and the preservation of effective competition in digital markets.

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<sup>33</sup> [DGCCRF, Pitfalls on E-commerce Sites: Watch Out for Dark Patterns!, 2023.](#)

<sup>34</sup> [DGCCRF, Hidden Subscriptions or Bundled Insurance: How to Avoid and Cancel Them, 2023.](#)

<sup>35</sup> [DGCCRF, How to Shop Safely Online?, 2024.](#)

<sup>36</sup> [DGCCRF, Code of Conduct: Influencers and Content Creators, 2026.](#)

<sup>37</sup> [DITP, DGCCRF, Applied Behavioural Sciences: Better Protecting Online Consumers, 2021.](#)

<sup>38</sup> Those that aim to limit consumers' ability to act, those that manipulate their attention and preferences, and those that exaggerate desirability or artificially create a sense of urgency

<sup>39</sup> [CNIL, Competition and personal data: a shared ambition, 2023.](#)

<sup>40</sup> [CNIL, DGCCRF, Cooperation agreement on consumer protection and personal data, 2024.](#)

This organizational evolution is also part of the DGCCRF's 2025–2028 strategic plan, one of whose priorities is to strengthen consumer protection online by improving investigative methods and enhancing the skills of agents in both competition and consumer affairs. Furthermore, as part of the implementation of the Artificial Intelligence Regulation, the DGCCRF plans to create a dedicated AI unit to adapt its practices in line with the application of this new regulation and to fulfil the coordination role entrusted to it.

40. For its part, the French Competition Authority has developed expertise in anti-competitive practices in the digital sector with the creation in 2020 of the Digital Economy Division. This division is in charge, in particular, of developing in-depth expertise on all digital issues and collaborating on investigations into anti-competitive practices in the digital economy.

41. Finally, the DGCCRF now serves as the secretariat and coordinator for the interministerial VigE-commerce task force. Officially launched on April 29, 2026, following lessons learned from the SHEIN crisis (child pornography and weapons detected on the platform), this task force currently brings together representatives from eight ministries and ARCOM. Its purpose is to facilitate the sharing of intelligence and reports, as well as to coordinate the French authorities' response to the major challenges posed by e-commerce in terms of both product safety and fair commercial practices, from both a consumer and a competitive perspective. Its work is also intended to inform the Commission regarding the failure of certain very large platforms to adequately manage systemic risks.

42. Thus, the development of digital markets has profoundly strengthened the interactions between competition policy and consumer protection. The French experience shows, however, that while these two policies tend to converge, certain tensions may arise when consumer protection or personal data protection objectives produce effects on competitive dynamics. Strengthening coordination between authorities and developing more integrated approaches appear essential in order to ensure effective and balanced regulation of digital markets, so as to guarantee their proper competitive functioning and to effectively protect consumers.