

Duff on Hospitality Law

## **Class Actions, Competition Scrutiny and Lloyds' Travel Play: A Full Plate for Online Travel**

on 6.1.25

Good Sunday morning from Seattle . . . Our Online Travel Update for the week ending Friday, May 30, 2025, is below. Booking.com features prominently (again) in our Update this week as investigations into, and claims against, the major online travel agent increase (these things seem to come in waves). I hope you enjoy.

- **European Hoteliers Unite in Claims Against Booking.com.** The national hotel associations of 25 European countries announced this past week plans to bring a class action against Booking.com. Seeking to leverage the European Court of Justice's (ECJ) September 2024 ruling that Booking.com's parity provisions violated EU competition law, the hoteliers seek the recovery of portions of commissions paid during 2004 – 2024. The claims will be led by Stichting Hotel Claims Alliance and are expected to be filed in a Netherlands court. In response, Booking.com has stated that it is unaware of the announced claims and disputed the precedential value of the ECJ's decision.
- **Greek Authorities Investigating Unnamed Online Hotel Accommodations Booking Service.** On Friday, Greek competition authorities announced that it was "prioritizing" an investigation into an "undertaking" operating in the market of online accommodations booking services. The investigation was triggered by a complaint and is reported to be at an "advanced" stage.
- **Hopper Ads UK Bank to HTS Powered Channels.** UK bank, Lloyds, announced a new partnership with HTS (Hopper's B2B division) to power Lloyd's new travel booking portal, Lloyd's Travel Booking. The portal, the first by a UK bank, offers cardholders access to flights and accommodations as well as HTS' other fintech offerings – price protection, price prediction, etc.
- **Generative AI's Impact on Hospitality.** If you've not joined one of Phocuswright's recent webinars (The New Age(nts) Trend Series) on generative AI, I encourage you to do so. This past week's episode focused specifically on AI and distribution. The recent episode is available [here](#).

- **“The Machine” – Booking.com.** Like many of you, I've heard many stories of the tell all book about Booking.com's rise to prominence in the online travel world. Although Skift was kind enough to recently share some of the book's many highlights, I'm still searching for an English translation of the book. If anyone ever finds an English translation, please let me know.

Have a great week.

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### **Online Hotel Booking Competition Probe Prioritized by Greek Watchdog**

*May 30, 2025 via MLex*

The Greek competition authority said today it had prioritized an investigation into the market for online hotel accommodation booking services. It said the probe was triggered by a complaint, and today's move indicates it is “at an advanced stage.”

### **How Will Generative AI Impact Travel Distribution?**

*May 29, 2025 via Phocus Wire*

In the latest installment of Phocuswright's The New Age(nts) Trend Series, industry leaders discussed the travel sector's preparedness for distribution shifts in the face of the generative AI revolution.

### **Hopper Partners with Lloyds to Launch Travel Booking Portal**

*May 28, 2025 via PhocusWire*

With the launch, Lloyds became the first U.K. bank to offer a travel booking service for its consumers.

### **European Hoteliers Launch Collective Legal Action Against Booking.com**

*May 28, 2025 via Hotel News Resource*

National hotel associations from more than 25 European countries are launching a landmark pan-European collective action against Booking.com, supported by HOTREC, the umbrella association representing the hospitality sector in Europe. This unprecedented legal move follows the European Court of Justice (ECJ) ruling of 19 September 2024, which confirmed that Booking.com's ...

### **Booking.com Faces Dutch Class Action Over Pricing Clauses**

*May 28, 2025 via MLex*

National hotel associations from 25 countries are planning to sue Booking.com in the Netherlands in class-action proceedings over the platform's use of pricing clauses. The hoteliers have committed to join forces and bring the action after a ruling from the EU court in September on the legality of "parity clauses."

### **OpenAI's New Device Company and the Race for the Ultimate Travel Assistant**

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*May 27, 2025 via Skift*

OpenAI is taking a step toward its AI knowing more about you. For travelers, that could be key to an assistant that anticipates needs. Select a question above or ask something else Big tech companies developing generative AI have said they envision their tech as an everyday personal ...

### **Inside Booking.com: Ousted CEOs, Power Struggles and Local Backlash**

*May 27, 2025 via Skift*

“The Machine,” a 2021 book written by three investigative journalists in the Netherlands, documented key moments in Booking.com’s history from its founding in Amsterdam in 1996.