



## **Chamber of Progress Submission**

### **CMA Consultation on SMS Investigation into Strategic Market Status Investigation into Google's General Search Services - Proposed Decision 21 July 2025**

On behalf of Chamber of Progress – a tech industry association supporting public policies to build a more inclusive society in which all people benefit from technological advancements – I write to respond to the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) consultation on the Proposed Decision in the Strategic Market Status (SMS) Investigation into Google's general search and search advertising services (“the Investigation”).<sup>1</sup>

During the course of this investigation, we previously submitted that the CMA should carefully consider the benefits that Google’s conduct generates for UK users, and the costs of intervention that could reduce or eliminate these benefits.<sup>2</sup> Google itself notes that its services have generated £118 billion in value for the UK in 2023 alone.<sup>3</sup> In light of the Proposed Decision,<sup>4</sup> we re-iterate that point here. We furthermore raise concerns with the use of competition law to address questions of copyright licensing, and the negative consequences for consumers of forcing changes to Google’s default agreements with mobile device manufacturers.

#### **1. Preserving the Value that Google Search generates for consumers and business users in the UK**

As the CMA continues its work under the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumer Act 2024 (DMCCA),<sup>5</sup> we encourage continued vigilance to preserve the benefits that Google Search generates for users. In particular, the DMCCA requires an assessment of “countervailing benefits”,<sup>6</sup> and an assessment of proportionality for any conduct requirements.<sup>7</sup> These are comparative advantages for the CMA, and should be used to avoid the unintended

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<sup>1</sup> CMA “CMA takes first steps to improve competition in search services in the UK”, 24 June 2025, available [here](#); CMA consultation page, available [here](#).

<sup>2</sup> Chamber of Progress “SMS Investigation Into Google’s Search and Advertising Services”, 3 February 2025, available [here](#).

<sup>3</sup> Google “Protecting innovation and growth in the UK”, 24 June 2025, available [here](#).

<sup>4</sup> CMA “Strategic market status investigation into Google's general search services - Proposed Decision”, 24 June 2025, available [here](#).

<sup>5</sup> Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act 2024 (DMCCA), available [here](#).

<sup>6</sup> DMCCA, Section 29

<sup>7</sup> CMA Digital markets competition regime guidance CMA194 (19 December 2024), para. 3.33-3.36, available [here](#).

consequences and harmful side-effects that other regulatory interventions into Google Search have caused in other jurisdictions.<sup>8</sup>

## **2. Focus on Harms to Competition, not Setting Prices for Publishers**

The CMA's Roadmap of possible measures to improve competition in search ("Roadmap")<sup>9</sup> indicates concerns with challenges that publishers could face in securing "fair" terms and control over how their content is used in Google's search and AI-generated responses. However, the Government is already engaged in ongoing consultations around copyright and AI,<sup>10</sup> and legislation to address these concerns is expected in the next year.

The licensing of copyrighted material for the training of generative AI is a complex topic that affects not only Google but a wide range of small technology companies not covered by the DMCCA, or even competition law. It's an issue that touches on multiple policy areas with impacts that go far beyond competition. It would be premature for the CMA to impose licensing prices that it considers "fair" in this context.

## **3. Prioritise Price Competition for Mobile Devices**

The CMA's Roadmap also indicates concerns that default agreements with mobile device manufacturers can make it more difficult for competitors to reach customers. Default agreements are an important channel for app developers to market their services to end-users, by paying OEMs. These payments to OEMs ultimately increase price competition, resulting in cheaper mobile devices for end-users.

The EU already prohibited a series of Google's default agreements in its Android decision,<sup>11</sup> but this led to higher prices for OEMs and ultimately reduced price competition in the EEA.<sup>12</sup> This is disproportionately harmful to users who rely on the most affordable Android devices. We therefore urge the CMA to carefully consider the impact on these users in particular when assessing any possible interventions that would make Android devices more expensive.

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<sup>8</sup> See e.g., Chamber of Progress "Europe's Digital Curtain: How the Digital Markets Act Is Turning Europeans into Second-Class Digital Citizens", December 2024, available [here](#).

<sup>9</sup> CMA "Roadmap of possible measures to improve competition in search" (24 June 2025), available [here](#).

<sup>10</sup> Government "Copyright and AI: Consultation", December 2024, available [here](#).

<sup>11</sup> EC "Antitrust: Commission fines Google €4.34 billion for illegal practices regarding Android mobile devices to strengthen dominance of Google's search engine", 17 July 2018, available [here](#).

<sup>12</sup> The Verge "Google app suite costs as much as \$40 per phone under new EU Android deal", 19 October 2018, available [here](#).

## **Concluding Remarks**

Chamber of Progress welcomes the CMA's continued efforts to promote competitive digital markets under the framework established by the DMCCA. As the CMA considers potential interventions in general search and search advertising services, we encourage a sustained focus on proportionality and countervailing benefits that will preserve the value that platform services generate for users in the UK.

These tools are particularly important in markets characterised by rapid innovation and evolving user behaviour. In areas such as default arrangements with mobile device manufacturers and the treatment of copyright licensing for AI-generated results, we encourage the CMA to proceed carefully, recognising both the broader policy context and the potential for unintended effects on price competition. The CMA's statutory framework allows for proportionate, iterative interventions that can adapt as market conditions evolve, and which can be modified if found to be insufficient. We urge the CMA to take advantage of the advantages that its statutory framework allows.

We remain committed to supporting the CMA's objectives and contributing to a regulatory environment that strengthens the UK's digital economy, safeguards consumer welfare, and enables continued progress. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Kayvan Hazemi-Jebelli  
Senior Director for Europe