

# Hotel review sites

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## SERVICES IN THE INTERNAL MARKET AND HOTEL REVIEW SITES

Directive [2006/123/EC](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006 on services in the internal market

### Objective

In order to achieve a “genuine” internal market for services by 2010, the Directive aims to remove barriers to the freedom of establishment for service providers in Member States and barriers to the free provision of services between Member States. It also aims to increase the choice offered to recipients and improve the quality of services for consumers and businesses.

### Relevance for the hospitality industry

The Directive is relevant to the sector for several reasons (see sheet on the Services Directive in general). Inter alia, it calls for “increased transparency ... with regard to the quality of the services offered” and encourages “the development of independent assessments ... in relation to the quality ... of service provision”.

For these reasons, the development of hotel review sites can be seen in the context of the Services Directive.

### State of progress

Adopted. Member States shall bring into force the laws, regulations and administrative provisions necessary to comply with this Directive before 28 December 2009.

### Content

Hotel review sites provide hotel guests with the possibility of reading about the experiences of a large number of other travellers before making their own reservations.

Hotel review sites allow hotels:

- to present their offer in a consumer-friendly environment;
- to better occupy market niches;
- to carry out, on the basis of these “online guest comment books”, analysis of their weak spots; and
- to use these evaluations for benchmarking guests’ satisfaction.

Customers:

- may describe their experiences in relation to their stay;
- are assisted in their search for the most suitable hotel matching their specific needs, based on the reviews of previous guests.

Hotel review sites can, unfortunately, be the occasion of unfair commercial practices as well as they can be misused by consumers.

National law is providing remedies to these situations. Some EU Directives, notably Directive 2005/29/EC on unfair commercial practices, reinforce the national legislation remedies.

## HOTREC position

In 2007, HOTREC launched a dialogue with hotel review sites and proposed 10 principles on their functioning. Some of the most relevant sites took up this dialogue.

See also:

[www.hotelreviewsites.hotrec.eu](http://www.hotelreviewsites.hotrec.eu)

## Official reference

Directive [2006/123/EC](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006 on services in the internal market, O.J. L 376 of 27.12.06

See also:

Directive [2005/29/EC](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2005 concerning unfair business-to-consumer commercial practices in the internal market and amending Council Directive 84/450/EEC, Directives 97/7/EC, 98/27/EC and 2002/65/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council ('Unfair Commercial Practices Directive'), O.J. L 149 of 11.6.2005

Directive [97/7/EC](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 1997 on the protection of consumers in respect of distance contracts, O.J. L 144 of 4.6.1997

Directive [2000/31/EC](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 8 June 2000 on certain legal aspects of information society services, in particular electronic commerce, in the Internal Market ('Directive on electronic commerce'), O.J. L 178 of 17.7.2000

European Parliament study on "Online Hotel Reservation Systems", requested by the IMCO Committee of the EP, February 2009, [IP/A/IMCO/FWC/2006-058/LOT4/C1/SC8](#)