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Answer given by Mr McGrath
on behalf of the European Commission
(23.5.2025)

The Unfair Commercial Practices Directive¹ prohibits traders from submitting or commissioning another person to submit false consumer reviews and from misrepresenting them, such as by only soliciting and making available positive reviews and deleting the negative ones. It also prohibits traders, e.g. platforms specialised in collecting and making available reviews, from presenting those reviews as consumer reviews if they do not take reasonable steps to check that they originate from consumers who had purchased or used the product. Traders must inform consumers about whether and how they ensure that the reviews that they make available originate from consumers who actually purchased or used the service.

It is for Member States' authorities and courts to enforce these rules. The Commission coordinates their work in cross-border cases under the Consumer Protection Cooperation Regulation². The Commission is currently reflecting on a review of this Regulation to strengthen enforcement of Union consumer law and ensure a level playing field.

Under the Digital Services Act³, providers of very large online platforms and very large online search engines are required to identify and mitigate the systemic risks stemming from the use of their services⁴, including risks posed by the inauthentic use of their services, such as fake reviews.

In addition, the Commission promotes voluntary measures by online marketplaces through the Consumer Protection Pledge⁵.

¹ 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.

² Regulation (EU) 2017/2394 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2017 on cooperation between national authorities responsible for the enforcement of consumer protection laws and repealing Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004.

³ Regulation (EU) 2022/2065 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 October 2022 on a Single Market for Digital Services and amending Directive 2000/31/EC.

⁴ Articles 34 and 35 of the Digital Services Act.

⁵ The commitments signed in November 2023 by 11 major online marketplaces include measures to make consumer reviews more transparent and reliable by informing the traders operating on the marketplaces and the reviewers about the prohibition of fake reviews, requiring the reviewers to disclose any incentives received and ensuring impartial processing and presentation of reviews (https://commission.europa.eu/document/8d85b491-81d4-487e-9de9-cb071c8dba41_en).