



## **The Hungarian Competition Authority screened GTCs of online dating services**

**The Hungarian Competition Authority (GVH) screened the General Terms and Conditions (GTC) of seven popular online dating services in the framework of a global collaboration project between February 7-8, 2018**

In the framework of Sweep Day initiated and coordinated by ICPEN, the International Consumer Protection and Enforcement Network, an umbrella organization of 58 countries' consumer protection authorities, the participant members investigated the target sectors according to harmonized criteria. The members browsed and searched the Internet in order to unveil misleading or deceptive practices of the web based services.

Through the widescope sweep entitled „Contract terms in digital economy” the GVH screened the General Terms and Conditions of online dating services available on PC, Android- and iOS tools, basically investigating whether the content of GTCs allow the consumer to make informed transactional decisions.

Highlighting the outstanding popularity and widescale use of online dating sites, the GVH warns that the practices of online dating services' consumer information must meet criteria of fair information providing. It is essential that all basic conditions and circumstances, such as the exact content of services, the service fees, the cases that prompt a change in service fees, the methods of entering and terminating a service contract must be communicated in a clear, transparent and accurate manner to the consumer.

Accordingly, the **online dating services shall provide that**

- the cancellation of services is not made technically more complicated than the simple, few-click subscription process;
- GTCs must be available in Hungarian language;
- the wording of informative and legal documents such as GTCs is not lengthy and unstructured, without any guiding highlights of essential conditions and interrupted with cross-references - to enhance clarity, comprehensibility and transparency of information;
- no significant circumstances and conditions necessary for service use are hidden, unavailable or covertly published.

The **users of online dating services can make more informed decisions** and enjoy the services without unpleasant surprise if

- they review the integrity and reliability of the selected service website (i.e. users should check if relevant data about the service provides appear on the website: is it an existing company or not; users should also check out user opinions, blogs, feedback about the online dating site – to make sure that the selected dating site lists existing profiles and users are satisfied with the services provided;
- they devote time to read service conditions in the GTC that can be relevant for their own use, e.g. conditions on membership and related fees;
- they contact the service provider’s customer service regarding questions on the GTC;
- they changed their minds following registration and decided to cancel the services within the 14 days deadline;
- they pay attention whether the contract is temporary or for indefinite duration, and whether a temporary contract is automatically renewed;
- they check possibilities for contract cancellation prior to registration – it is practical to set up a phone or notepad reminder about the date of cancellation of renewal, to prevent unwanted service renewals;
- they generate a separate email address for the use of dating sites;
- they store correspondence that is related to the cancellation of contract with the Service Provider, or save correspondence by means of print screens

The ICPEN Sweep provides greater insight for the GVH into practices typical in the online dating sector – if needed, such insight can ground the initiation of future competition surveillance procedures.

The ICPEN [website](#) provides detailed information on the Sweep Day – a comprehensive analysis of participating members’ reports will be published in the first half of 2018.

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