

NEWS – ECIPE PRESS RELEASE – NEW OCCASIONAL PAPER

What About Us? Consumer Response to the Digital Markets Act

By **Matthias Bauer** and **Dyuti Pandya**, *Director and Analyst, respectively, at ECIPE.*

Brussels, 21 October 2025 - *New Survey Reveals: Digital Markets Act Fails to Deliver on Its Core Promises.*

A new [joint study](#) by the European Public Policy Partnership (EPPP) and the European Centre for International Political Economy (ECIPE) finds that the EU's flagship competition regulation, the Digital Markets Act (DMA), has not achieved its intended impact. Two years after the law entered into force, the DMA has neither improved affordability or privacy for consumers nor made digital markets more open and contestable for businesses.

The study is based on a large-scale consumer survey across seven Central and Eastern European Member States. It shows that **most consumers have seen no tangible benefits, while business dynamics remain largely unchanged.**

Key Findings

- **Affordability** – Consumers report no decrease in the cost of digital services. New regulatory-driven subscription models, such as paid ad-free options, have effectively made privacy a premium product rather than a universal safeguard.
- **Limited impact on user experience** – 39% of respondents say that completing everyday online tasks has become more cumbersome since the DMA came into effect. Several widely used services have become less integrated and less intuitive, with added steps and choice screens diminishing convenience.
- **Market contestability** – Usage patterns remain concentrated around a small number of dominant platforms. There is little evidence of new entrants gaining traction or of meaningful shifts in platform competition. The regulatory framework has not altered underlying market structures.

- **Awareness gap** – 80% of consumers are unfamiliar with the DMA, underlining the disconnect between regulatory ambition and real-world outcomes.

These results indicate that the DMA has **failed to deliver its central objectives** of promoting more competitive digital markets while enhancing consumer experience and trust.

Policy Recommendations

The report outlines two strategic options for the future of EU digital regulation:

1. **Repeal the DMA and return to case-by-case competition enforcement** – allowing for targeted, evidence-based interventions, reducing legal uncertainty, and enabling market forces to drive genuine contestability.
2. **Targeted reform** – scaling back or suspending obligations that create friction without delivering measurable benefits, including rules on self-preferencing, choice screens, and interoperability mandates.

Quote – Erik Szedély, Senior Analyst at EPPP: *"The DMA has been reshaping the way consumers interact with the most popular online platforms for more than two years. However, when we weighed the legislation's success against the European Commission's own stated policy goals – responding to public demand for greater protection and improving user experience by expanding choice of digital services – we found a crucial regulatory disconnect. It is true that consumers today are more concerned about their online privacy than ever before. However, the DMA's provisions have not created a safer environment. Instead of enjoying 'better' services, a significant share of users report additional, time-consuming friction. And to access an untracked, 'more private' experience, users must now either pay or accept a degraded experience."*

Quote – Matthias Bauer, Director at ECIPE: *"From its inception, the DMA has been characterised by diluted policy objectives, ambiguous legal concepts, and broadly framed obligations that invite multiple interpretations. This has created persistent legal uncertainty for both regulated high-technology firms and their users. Two years into its application, the evidence is clear: neither competition nor market contestability has improved in any meaningful way, and the anticipated gains for consumers in terms of benefits and safety have failed to materialise."*

About the Study

The report "What About Us? Consumer Response to the Digital Markets Act" draws on survey data collected by Ipsos in July 2025, covering 3,500 respondents across Slovakia, Czechia, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia, Latvia, and Lithuania. The analysis and conclusions are those of ECIPE and EPPP.

The study provides one of the first empirical assessments of the DMA's impact in newer EU Member States – showing that regulatory ambition has not translated into more competitive markets or improved consumer outcomes.

Publication details: [What About Us? Consumer Response to the Digital Markets Act](#), ECIPE Occasional Paper No. 10/2025.

Contact the corresponding author: Matthias Bauer, matthias.bauer@ecipe.org

Media inquiries: info@ecipe.org or +32 (0) 499 053 110