

CMA to investigate Amazon and Google over fake reviews

In this next phase of the work, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) will gather further information to determine whether these two firms may have broken consumer law by taking insufficient action to protect shoppers from fake reviews.

The move comes after an initial CMA investigation, which opened in May 2020, and assessed several platforms' internal systems and processes for identifying and dealing with fake reviews.

This work has raised specific concerns such as whether Amazon and Google have been doing enough to:

- Detect fake and misleading reviews or suspicious patterns of behaviour. For example, where the same users have reviewed the same range of products or businesses at similar times to each other and there is no connection between those products or businesses – or where the review suggests that the reviewer has received a payment or other incentive to write a positive review.
- Investigate and, where necessary, remove promptly fake and misleading reviews from their platforms.
- Impose adequate sanctions on reviewers or businesses to deter them and others from posting fake or misleading reviews on their platforms – including those who have published these types of reviews many times.

The CMA is also concerned that Amazon's systems have been failing adequately to prevent and deter some sellers from manipulating product listings – for example, by co-opting positive reviews from other products.

Fake and misleading reviews have the potential to impact on businesses' star ratings and how prominently companies and products are displayed to consumers, changing their whole shopping experience.

Andrea Coscelli, the CMA's Chief Executive, said:

Our worry is that millions of online shoppers could be misled by reading fake reviews and then spending their money based on those recommendations. Equally, it's simply not fair if some businesses can fake 5-star reviews to give their products or services the most prominence, while law-abiding businesses lose out.

We are investigating concerns that Amazon and Google have not been doing enough to prevent or remove fake reviews to protect customers and honest businesses. It's important that these tech platforms take responsibility and we stand ready to take action if we find that they are not doing enough.

If, after investigating, the CMA considers the firms have broken consumer protection law, it can take enforcement action. This could include securing formal commitments from the firms to change the way they deal with fake reviews or escalating to court action if needed. However, the CMA has not reached a view on whether Amazon and Google have broken the law at this stage.

This latest work builds on action taken by the CMA last year over the [trading of fake reviews](#), which resulted in Facebook, Instagram and eBay removing groups and banning individuals for buying and selling fake reviews on their sites.

The CMA's investigation into fake reviews is part of a broader programme of CMA work, which includes establishing a new pro-competition regulatory regime for digital markets, to curb the power of big tech. This will be achieved through the Digital Markets Unit. As the CMA works with the Government on proposals, it will continue to use its existing powers to their fullest extent in order to examine and protect competition in these areas.

More information about the CMA's probe into Amazon and Google can be found on the [Online Reviews case page](#).

[Presentation of British sheep genetics in Paraguay](#)

The British Ambassador to Paraguay, Ramin Navai, hosted a reception on Wednesday 23 June for the presentation of British Hampshire Down and Texel sheep breeds. The event will celebrate the progress of the joint work in the area and will feature a sheep of each breed on display. The reception followed all necessary measures in compliance with local provisions for the prevention of COVID-19.

Work across sectors

This presentation is the result of work that began in mid-2020, when a British company requested assistance in importing genetic material to Paraguay. The British Embassy in Asunción opened a technical dialogue between veterinary experts of the Paraguay National Animal Health and Quality Service (SENACSA) and their British counterpart, the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra), to obtain the corresponding permission.

After months of intense work, SENACSA granted the British exporters permission to send sheep embryos to the country. Imports are possible thanks to a partnership between the private sector, the British Embassy and SENACSA. Local producers will import the embryos for local production, aiming to

supply the region.

From Paraguay to the world

Paraguay already has local producers breeding British breeds of sheep, such as Hampshire Down and Texel, the latter being a British-Dutch hybrid. This new joint achievement aims to turn the country into a world-class centre to produce sheep genetics. Speaking to local media, the president of the Paraguayan Association of Sheep Breeders (APCO), Mr. Nicolás Peña said:

Sheep farming is a thriving sector with great potential. (...) Now we will take a big step, because the country needs to handle industrial volumes to position itself as a consumer power.

On the other hand, Ambassador Ramin Navai commented:

We will continue to work with the associations, with SENACSA and with Defra.

We are committed to continue building on the advancements made so far, aiming to boost sheep farming in Paraguay by incorporating British genetics.

UK's ovine leadership

The United Kingdom is in the top 10 sheep breeding countries of the world and the largest in Europe in terms of quantity and exports. It has about 90 different breeds of sheep.

United Kingdom offers export certification for:

- sheep semen and embryos to the 27 members of the European Union
- semen to Brazil, Canada and the United States
- semen and embryos to Chile, Guyana, Mexico, New Zealand and other countries

[Sheep leaflet](#) (PDF, 1.03MB, 8 pages)

UK travel update: Malta added to green list and green watchlist extended as plans for quarantine-free travel for fully vaccinated passengers from amber list countries confirmed

- Malta, Madeira, the Balearic Islands, several UK overseas territories, and Caribbean islands, including Barbados are added to the government's green list for travel
- UK government in response to the Global Travel Taskforce recommendation on checkpoint review, has announced plans to reopen international travel, including plans to remove the self-isolation period for amber list countries for those who are fully vaccinated, with full details set out next month
- Eritrea, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Mongolia, Tunisia and Uganda added to the red list to safeguard domestic vaccine rollout

The Transport Secretary, Grant Shapps, has today (24 June 2021) confirmed a number of measures to continue cautiously reopening international travel in a safe and sustainable way.

From 4am Wednesday 30 June, Malta, Madeira, the Balearic Islands, several UK overseas territories and Caribbean islands (including Barbados) will be added to the government's [green list](#), having met the necessary criteria to be reclassified.

All additions to the green list apart from Malta will also join the 'green watchlist', as will Israel and Jerusalem – signalling that these countries are at risk of moving from green to amber.

The full list of countries to be added to the [red list](#) includes Eritrea, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Mongolia, Tunisia and Uganda, and all measures will continue to be kept under review to protect public health as the top priority. They present a high public health risk to the UK from known variants of concern (VOC), known high-risk variants under investigation (VUI) or as a result of very high in-country or territory prevalence of COVID-19.

All classification changes have been decided by ministers, informed by the latest data and analysis by the Joint Biosecurity Centre (JBC) and wider public health considerations, to help the public understand the risks to public health of travelling to different destinations. All measures announced today are designed to give travellers and the travel sector more certainty, will be kept under review, and further action may be taken to protect public health.

In recognition of our successful domestic vaccination programme, and as part

of the Global Travel Taskforce's [checkpoint review](#), our intention is that later in the summer, arrivals who are fully vaccinated will not have to quarantine when travelling from [amber list](#) countries. We expect this to occur in phases, starting with UK residents. They will still be required to take a [pre-departure test](#) and a [test on day 2](#), and any positive results will be sequenced to continue to manage the risk of importing variants.

At the same time, we intend to remove the guidance that people should not travel to amber countries. Pending decisions on whether under-18s should routinely be offered vaccination, we will also take clinical advice on whether regular testing can provide a safe alternative to quarantine for children accompanied by vaccinated adults.

Further detail will be set out next month including the rules which will apply to children and those unable to be vaccinated, how we will operationalise this approach at the border, and the dates on which these changes will come into effect.

Until these measures are introduced, all passengers, whether vaccinated or not, must continue to abide by quarantine rules for returning to the UK from an amber list country, and it is recommended that people should not travel to amber list countries at the moment. Individuals who fail to comply with their legal duty to quarantine at home following international travel can be fined £1,000, increasing up to £10,000 for repeat offences.

Transport Secretary, Grant Shapps said:

We're moving forward with efforts to safely reopen international travel this summer, and thanks to the success of our vaccination programme, we're now able to consider removing the quarantine period for fully vaccinated UK arrivals from amber countries – showing a real sign of progress.

It's right that we continue with this cautious approach, to protect public health and the vaccine rollout as our top priority, while ensuring that our route out of the international travel restrictions is sustainable.

Travel continues to be different this year, and passengers face longer wait times, although government is making every effort to speed up queues safely. Those returning from red list countries will continue to be separated from other passengers in dedicated terminals to be processed as safely and efficiently as possible, before being transferred to a managed quarantine hotel.

Heathrow CEO John Holland-Kaye said:

It is very positive news that ministers are following the science and that fully vaccinated people will be able to travel safely without quarantine later this summer.

We are a cosmopolitan country, a small island with strong links to the rest of the world. Exporters want to get out and sell their goods to the world, families want to reconnect after a year of separation. We will work with the government to make this happen as soon as possible and let Britain fly!

If travelling abroad, you need to take steps to keep safe and prepare in case things change before you go or while you are there. Check the booking terms and conditions on flexibility and refunds, because the situation remains fluid. Many travel firms have changed their terms to be fully flexible. Check and subscribe to [FCDO travel advice](#) updates to understand the latest entry requirements and COVID-19 rules – and passengers are advised to check all entry requirements and FCDO travel advice before they book any foreign travel.

Alok Sharma addresses African Development Bank meeting June 2021

Greetings to you all. And thank you for inviting me to join you today.

Friends, I am absolutely determined that COP26 will be a COP that delivers for the nations of Africa.

That it will support the countries of this continent to respond to the climate crisis, seize the opportunities presented by our green global future, and build back better from Covid-19, growing clean, resilient and prosperous economies.

I have witnessed first-hand the serious challenges faced by African countries.

Already this year, I have travelled to Egypt, Nigeria, Kenya, Ethiopia and Gabon, and there are plans for further trips as well in the coming weeks.

And what I do recognise very clearly is that the current health, the economic and climate crisis, are hitting Africa particularly hard.

And with the COVID pandemic ongoing, economic activity of course has been contracting, the debt challenges have been increasing, and the impact of climate change is being felt all over.

But what I have also witnessed is the huge amount of energy, and the innovation and the vision that I have seen from the communities that I have visited across the continent and the work that is being done to also tackle the climate crisis.

I completely recognise – and I have said this on many occasions – that finance is absolutely vital to supporting the efforts that are ongoing.

And a key priority for the COP Presidency – indeed a key priority for me – is to get finance flowing to climate action, particularly to vulnerable regions that have contributed quite frankly the least to the crisis that we all face.

And that's why we want, through that work, to ensure that every country has the opportunity to build a clean recovery from Covid-19.

I've said it before and I'm saying it again and I will keep saying this right up to COP: without finance the task ahead is near impossible.

And to deliver frankly on all the other priorities for COP26, we are going to have to deliver on finance.

And whether that is protecting people and nature from the effects of our changing climate,

or putting the world on a path to driving down emissions, until they reach net zero by the middle of this century,

or indeed that basic principle of keeping that 1.5 degree limit within reach, which is what we committed to of course as part of the Paris Agreement, all of that is going to rely on finance.

So, I have been absolutely clear with donor countries that we must deliver the \$100 billion a year we have promised to support developing countries through to 2025.

And of course this does mean action on urgently making up that \$20 billion shortfall from 2018.

As I have repeatedly said, this is a matter of trust.

And it is a priority for the UK's COP26 Presidency obviously but also for our Presidency of the G7.

What I am positive and pleased about is that at the G7 this year, and the communique that came out, each and every country, each and every leader, has committed to increase finance, including increasing funds for adaptation, which I think is so vitally important.

That mix between mitigation and adaptation. We cannot have adaptation being continually seen as the poor cousin of mitigation.

What we saw at G7 is Canada, Japan and Germany putting new money on the table.

Canada has committed to increase its climate finance to 5.3 billion Canadian Dollars by 2025. Japan has committed 6.5 trillion Yen by 2025, and Germany 6 billion Euros per year by 2025.

This of course is all very welcome.

But we all know there is further to go,

And we do need increased commitments.

And what we need is for the developed countries to set out a clear plan for how that \$100 billion will be delivered to 2025.

I am absolutely committed to continuing to work with all countries and stakeholders to ensure that we get there.

Now we also know that we must deal with other critical issues, such as the whole issue of the access to finance – it is one thing to have money made available but the other issue is how do you get access.

The issues on concessional financing, on fiscal space, and of course as I have said already, finance for adaptation.

A new allocation of Special Drawing Rights will help Africa, in terms of boosting fiscal space.

And therefore I'm really pleased that Kristalina Georgieva – who is leading the IMF – for the commentary that they have made but also the G7's recent commitment to explore options for richer countries to channel their own SDRs towards more vulnerable countries to support healthy, green and resilient recoveries.

And as COP26 President, I want to see a much higher level of SDR recycling than we saw following the 2009 crisis.

We must also get more finance flowing directly to adaptation and we must encourage and support countries to deliver locally led adaptation as well.

Colleagues will know, some of you may have participated in March, I convened a meeting of ministers and international institutions, and we brought together around 50 governments, to address this critical issue of finance and of course development aligned to that.

And I do think we saw some real progress?

For instance, we have now our friends in Fiji, other partners and the UK leading a taskforce on access to finance.

And earlier this year, with partners, which included Egypt and Malawi, the UK launched the Adaptation Action Coalition, where countries can share and scale solutions as well, focusing on enabling locally-led action on adaptation.

Finance ministers have a vital role in making sure that decisions in every corner of government take climate action and climate risk into account.

And it is absolutely clear that investing in areas like clean energy is not only good for the planet, but ultimately it is sound economics as well.

We know because we are seeing it in our own economies

Solar and wind are cheaper than coal and gas in the majority of the world.

And investment in renewables infrastructure creates more than twice as many jobs for the equivalent in fossil fuels, and you will have seen that from a recent study that was put out by the University of Oxford.

So what I think is that every country must have the chance to seize these opportunities as we repair the economic damage caused by Covid-19.

So that we can all collectively build clean, resilient economies, creating those green jobs of the future that we all want to see, and that green growth which is going to be absolutely vital going forward.

And, of course, the Multilateral Development Banks are essential to providing the finance that is needed.

Here in Africa of course the African Development Bank is playing an absolutely vital role.

And I really do applaud the Bank's commitment to direct at least half of its climate finance to adaptation.

And I also recognise the Bank's leadership with its Africa Adaptation Acceleration Programme.

And I very much welcome the work the Bank is doing with the private sector through the African Financial Alliance on Climate Change, and the African Disaster Risk Finance Programme.

And the UK COP26 Presidency is calling on all MDBs, including of course the AfDB, to share a very clear action plan by COP26 on mobilising more finance from the private sector. I think this is going to be absolutely vital: that leverage effect to get the private sector alongside public finance.

I am of course very pleased that the AfDB is considering announcing a date by which it will fully align with the Paris Agreement.

And I would urge you, request you, to please do this before COP26 itself, in line with the ambition set by other MDBs.

I also applaud the support AfDB is providing to help countries to develop and deliver Nationally Determined Contributions.

And I really would ask the Bank to look to see what more it can do to support countries to develop even more ambitious NDCs, those Long Term Strategies which are absolutely vital, and of course the National Adaptation Plans, which we want to see come in ahead of COP26.

The reality is that if we are serious about keeping the goals of the Paris Agreement within reach, and limiting global temperature rises to 1.5 degrees, we must consign coal power to history.

So, I am very grateful for the AfDB's key role in the COP26 Energy Transition Council that we are running, and of course your support for the Rapid Response Facility, supporting the clean energy transition in Africa.

And I'd encourage you to please update your energy policy in line with President Adesina's commitment at the UN Climate Action Summit to formally end financing for coal,

and to stop financing oil and of course limit investments in gas to situations where this is part of a planned move to cleaner energy systems.

I would also like to see the Bank increase its support for nature,

and sign a joint statement on nature at COP26 with other MDBs, committing to consider the impact on nature across all your operations.

And I urge you to support countries to build back better from Covid-19, including by complementing very good regional initiatives like the African Union's Green Recovery Action Plan, and by prioritising investments that help countries to build clean, resilient economies.

Because friends, the green, prosperous future I do believe is within our grasp.

But only if we take this chance, to build back better and build back greener.

And if we do, I believe we can protect people and nature, we can preserve our precious planet.

And we can help to drive African resilience, African growth and African development,

Thank you.

ENDS.

PM meeting with Libya's interim Prime Minister Abdulhamid Dabaiba: 24 June 2021

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson met with Libya's interim Prime Minister Abdulhamid Dabaiba at Downing Street this afternoon.



The Prime Minister welcomed Libya's interim Prime Minister Abdulhamid Dabaiba to Downing Street today, to reaffirm the UK's support for his efforts to stabilise Libya and oversee the transition to democracy.

They discussed the ongoing security concerns in Libya, including the destabilising presence of foreign fighters, and the importance of making progress towards holding national elections in December.

The Prime Minister welcomed the upcoming opening of the Libyan National Oil Corporation's European hub in London and they resolved to boost trade and investment between our two countries.

Both leaders also celebrated the return of an ancient Greek statue of the goddess Persephone, which had been looted from Libya and was recovered with the support of the UK Government.

Finally, the Prime Minister encouraged Libya to ratify the Paris Agreement and hoped that Libya would attend the COP26 climate summit in November.

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