RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

Autorité de la concurrence

Public consultation as part of the decision to start inquiries *ex officio* and issue an opinion on the conversational agents sector

The *Autorité de la concurrence* (hereinafter "the *Autorité*") is launching a public consultation[1] to gather feedback from stakeholders on the competitive situation in the conversational agents sector in France. Conversational agents are generative AI-based tools that interact with users in real time in natural language, capable of responding to queries or assisting users with tasks in an automated manner.

The *Autorité* intends to explore several themes examined below. However, the relationship between conversational agents and search engines is not within the scope of this consultation.

Stakeholders are invited to respond to all or part of the questions **before 6 March 2026**. If your response contains confidential information, please identify the relevant parts. For example, you can highlight any information that is confidential.

The public consultation

Through this public consultation, the Investigation Services are seeking the contribution of all operators in the sector (companies offering generative AI services, cloud service providers, e-commerce platforms and e-retailers, customers, etc.). They are invited to present their activities and their place in the value chain, and to express their views on current or future competition issues.

[1] See the *Autorité* press release of 9 January 2026.

I. Conversational agents

A. OPERATORS AND THE MARKET

1. What does the term “conversational agent” mean to you? Is it appropriate to distinguish “conversational agents” from “chatbots” or “virtual assistants”?
2. Who are the main operators in the conversational agents sector in France (e.g. by number of users)? Are there any specific characteristics of the French market? In your opinion, what are the differences between the main conversational agents? What are their respective advantages?
3. Do you use one or more conversational agents in your activities? If so, which ones? Can you, where relevant, detail the different use cases for each conversational agent used?
4. If you use one or more conversational agents developed by your organisation (open-weight model, locally hosted):
    - What considerations led you to prefer this type of agent over those offered by external publishers?
    - Please describe the architecture of the agents concerned and the different components that make up the technology stack.
5. In your opinion, what are the potential barriers to entry or expansion in the conversational agents sector (data, computing power, capital, distribution, etc.)?

B. INTEGRATION OF CONVERSATIONAL AGENTS WITHIN THE EXISTING SERVICES OF VERTICALLY INTEGRATED COMPANIES

6. Is the integration of certain conversational agents within the existing services of vertically integrated companies (e.g. messaging service, office suite, etc.) likely to raise competition risks? If so, what are they?
7. How do you assess the interoperability between the services of vertically integrated companies (e.g. messaging service, office suite, etc.) and third-party conversational agents? What is the impact of the legislative and regulatory framework (DMA, Data Act, AI Act, etc.) on the interoperability between these services?

C. MONETISATION

8. Publishers of conversational agents are seeking to diversify the use of their services and the avenues for monetisation, in order to make their services profitable (e.g. token-based billing[2] for APIs, subscriptions, advertising for interfaces). From your perspective:
    - How do the different monetisation options differ from each other?

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[2] Billing per unit of text processed.

- How do you envision the evolution of the economic models of conversational agents in the future? What other sources could they leverage?

9. Does the integration of advertising in conversational agents differ from other types of online advertising? In particular:
    - Does it present any specific technical characteristics?
    - Is the way that advertising is integrated and displayed in conversational agents likely to raise competition risks? If so, what are they?

D. PARTNERSHIPS ESTABLISHED BY PUBLISHERS OF CONVERSATIONAL AGENTS

10. In your opinion, in what cases or for what type of operators is it important to establish partnerships with publishers of conversational agents? If you are considering or have established such partnerships, can you explain the reasons?
11. Are the partnerships established by publishers of conversational agents with technology, financial or commercial operators likely to raise competition risks? If so, what are they?

E. THE TRANSFORMATION OF CONVERSATIONAL AGENTS INTO PLATFORMS

12. It has recently been observed that conversational agents allow users to directly access an increasing number of third-party services without leaving the conversation window or to connect to applications within their own ecosystem.
    - Do you consider that conversational agents are transforming into platforms?
    - What are the advantages and disadvantages of such a "platformisation" process?
    - Do you perceive any competition risks associated with this evolution of conversational agents?

II. Agentic commerce[3]

13. What does the term "agentic commerce" mean to you? In your opinion:
    - Who are the main operators in the agentic commerce value chain (including technology, financial or commercial operators) in France?
    - Can the e-commerce services currently offered by conversational agents be qualified as agentic commerce services?

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[3] Agentic commerce is a form of online commerce in which conversational agents make purchases "on behalf of" users.

14. What are the current or upcoming use cases offered?

    - Are there sectors where agentic commerce is most used today? If so, which ones and why?
    - Which sectors are more likely to be impacted by agentic commerce in the short and medium term? Why?

15. Do you identify any specific opportunities or barriers (regulatory, technological, financial or other) to the widespread use of agentic commerce in France?

16. How do you compare the development of agentic commerce in France and the United States? Are there differences in terms of adoption by customers?

17. To what extent is agentic commerce likely to modify the demand for traditional e-commerce?

    - Does the traffic directed by conversational agents constitute a significant share of the traffic of e-commerce websites?
    - How do you expect the share of traffic directed by conversational agents to evolve in the future?

18. To what extent is agentic commerce likely to modify the supply of traditional e-commerce? What strategies or actions should be taken to make a brand and/or product visible and recommended by conversational agents?

19. Can a company selling products or services decide to allow or prohibit the appearance of its products in the offers of a conversational agent? If yes, please indicate how. If not, please indicate the reasons.

20. What are the monetisation sources for agentic commerce agents?

    - Are they paid by the user, the retailer, or both?
    - To what extent are these sources likely to evolve?
    - Could they vary depending on the goods or services concerned?

21. What are the necessary interoperability methods for effective communication between the different operators in agentic commerce?

    - What do you think of the various initiatives aimed at establishing standards (e.g. Agentic Commerce Protocol, Universal Commerce Protocol, etc.)?
    - Have standards already been adopted by the sector, or has a *de facto* standard already emerged?

22. What is the impact of the development of agentic commerce on service providers in the e-commerce supply chain? On payment solution providers?

23. Are there any competition risks, including from the perspective of algorithmic collusion?

    - Is it relevant to distinguish these risks based on the different stages of the purchasing process (when products/services are proposed to the user, during payment or during repeat purchases)?
    - Are these risks related to the protocols used to perform these actions?
    - Do they vary depending on the goods and services involved?

III. Upcoming developments

24. In your opinion, what evolutions are we likely to see in the sector in the short or medium term (disappearance or entry of new operators, emergence of new technologies, evolution of uses, development of agentic commerce, offer of new services, etc.)?
25. In your opinion, is the legislative and regulatory framework adapted to address all the competition issues related to the conversational agents sector?
26. Do you have any recommendations to improve, if necessary, the competitive functioning of the sector?
27. Do you wish to bring other elements to the attention of the *Autorité*?

Practical information

If you wish to participate in the public consultation launched by the *Autorité*, please send your responses to the questions above by email to the dedicated email address (consultation-agents-conversationnels@autoritedelaconcurrence.fr) **before 6 March 2026**, specifying the name of the company (or organisation) on whose behalf you are responding, as well as its sector of activity.

Contributions will not be published. Their authors (names of companies or organisations) may, if appropriate, be cited in the opinion, unless they expressly indicate otherwise.