

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

The Autorité de la concurrence (hereinafter, “the Autorité”) is launching a public consultation¹ to gather feedback from stakeholders on the competitive situation in France regarding the sector of conversational agents. These are tools based on generative AI that interact in real time with users in natural language, capable of answering their questions or assisting them in tasks in an automated manner.

The Authority 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 March 6, 2026**. If your response contains confidential elements, please identify the relevant parts. For example, you can highlight elements in your responses to identify them as confidential.

The Public Consultation

The investigation services are seeking, through this document, the contribution of all actors in the sector (companies offering generative AI services, cloud service providers, e-commerce platforms and e-retailers, clients, etc.). They are invited to present their activities and their place in the value chain, and to express their views on current or future competitive issues.

¹ See the [Authority's press release](#) of January 9, 2026.

Conversational agents

ACTORS AND THE MARKET

1. What does the term "conversational agents" mean to you? Is it appropriate to distinguish "conversational agents" from "chatbots" or "virtual assistants"?
2. Who are the main players 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 organization (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 elements 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.)?

INTEGRATION OF CONVERSATIONAL AGENTS WITHIN EXISTING SERVICES OF VERTICALLY INTEGRATED COMPANIES

6. Is the integration of certain conversational agents within existing services of vertically integrated companies (e.g., messaging service, office suite, etc.) likely to raise competitive risks? If so, what are they?
7. How do you assess the interoperability between the services of vertically integrated companies (e.g., messaging services, 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 interoperability between these services?

MONETIZATION

8. Publishers of conversational agents are seeking to diversify the use of their services and monetization options in order to make these services profitable (e.g., token-based billing² for APIs, subscriptions, or advertising for interfaces). From your perspective:

² Billing per unit of text processed.

- How do these different monetization options differ from each other?
 - How do you envision the evolution of the economic models of these conversational agents? What other sources could they leverage?
9. Does the integration of advertisements in conversational agents differ from other online advertising displays? In particular:
- Does it present any specific technical characteristics?
 - Are the ad integration and display methods in conversational agents likely to raise competitive risks? If so, what are they?

PARTNERSHIPS ESTABLISHED BY PUBLISHERS OF CONVERSATIONAL AGENTS

10. In your opinion, in what cases or for what type of actors 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 technological, financial, or commercial actors likely to raise competitive risks? If so, what are they?

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 "platformization" process?
 - Do you perceive any competitive risks associated with this evolution of conversational agents?

Agentic Commerce³

13. How do you define the term "agentic commerce"? In your opinion:
- Who are the main players in the agentic commerce value chain (including technological, financial, or commercial actors) in France?
 - Can the online commerce services currently offered by conversational agents be qualified as agentic commerce services?

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 generalization 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 online commerce?
 - Does the traffic directed by conversational agents constitute an important part of the traffic for online retail websites?
 - What future evolution is to be expected in the share of traffic directed by conversational agents?
18. To what extent is agentic commerce likely to modify the supply of traditional online 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 monetization sources for these 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 under consideration?
21. What are the necessary interoperability methods for effective communication between the different actors 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 online commerce supply chain? On payment solution providers?
23. Are there any competitive 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 the renewal of previously made purchases)?
 - Are these risks related to the protocols used to perform these actions?
 - Do they vary depending on the goods and services involved?

Upcoming developments

24. In your opinion, what evolutions is the sector likely to experience in the short or medium term (disappearance or entry of new players, 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 competitive issues related to the sector of conversational agents?
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 Authority?

Practical modalities

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 following dedicated email address consultation-agents-conversationnels@autoritedelaconcurrence.fr **before March 6, 2026**, specifying the name of the company (or organization) on whose behalf you are responding, as well as its sector of activity.

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