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Date: 27/09/2021
Reference: BEUC-PR-2021-032

BEUC intervenes to support European Commission in European Court Google Android hearing

The European Consumer Organisation (BEUC) intervened at EU General Court hearings on 27 September 2021 in support of the European Commission's July 2018 antitrust decision against Google and its parent company Alphabet for imposing illegal restrictions on Android device manufacturers and mobile network operators to cement its dominant position in general internet search.

BEUC has intervened because it uniquely represents the interests of consumers in 32 European countries and considers that Google's practices harmed European consumers. For BEUC, "Google's actions were clearly anticompetitive – harmful to consumers in terms of lack of genuine choice and innovation".

BEUC's pleading before the General Court today sought to:

- "Burst the bubble of Google's narrative that its conduct was for the "good of the world" by providing Android for free". "Google may say it provided Android for free, but somebody ultimately paid a price for Google's monopolising conduct, and that's consumers."
- show that Google consciously acted to keep competitors out of the market by taking advantage of consumers' habit of keeping pre-installed search and browser apps rather than changing to alternatives. Consumers stick with what they see – or, to use Google's own words, "consumers stick with what comes on the device".

As a result of these anticompetitive practices, "Google became a monopoly gatekeeper to the web for millions of consumers in Europe (and worldwide), depriving them of choice and innovation" for more than a decade.

BEUC concluded its intervention at the 27 September hearing by stressing that "the decision under appeal is of paramount importance for consumers to stop Google abusing its market power to foreclose competition in general search services - not only for past behaviour, but also to set the standard for the future. Google must not be allowed to replicate its smartphone anticompetitive practices and the resulting consumer harm in other new smart device technologies such as voice assistants as these become increasingly important for consumers."

ENDS

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