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EU Commission protects consumers in Apple music streaming case

The European Commission's [decision](#) today that Apple broke EU antitrust rules by restricting consumers' choice of music streaming services in the EU's Single Market is a strong signal in favour of consumers.

The Commission decided Apple abused its dominant position in the distribution of music streaming apps through its App Store in breach of the EU Treaty antitrust rules' ban on abuse of monopoly power by preventing consumers from making informed choices in favour of alternative cheaper options. It is an important step that the Commission decided to pursue an 'exploitative abuse' case, where a dominant company exploits its market power to impose unfair trading conditions on others to the detriment of consumers.

Monique Goyens, BEUC Director General commented:

"This decision is very good news for consumers. It confirms that Europe's consumers have the right to see information about cheaper choices of music streaming services without Apple blocking this. This decision – in combination with effective enforcement of the Digital Markets Act – should help consumers benefit from more competitive and better digital services."

Background:

After an extensive investigation, in which BEUC [formally participated](#), the Commission decided that Apple distorted competition by imposing contractual restrictions on app developers which prevent them from informing consumers of alternative music subscription options at lower prices outside of the app and thereby harmed consumers' ability to choose those.

While Apple allows users to use music subscriptions purchased elsewhere, its rules prevent developers from informing users about alternative purchasing possibilities, which are usually cheaper.

Such App Store practices will be illegal under the EU Digital Markets Act (DMA). Apple and other large online service providers designated by the European Commission as internet "[gatekeepers](#)" are legally obliged to comply with the DMA from 7 March 2024.