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## **Digital Markets Act: landmark Big Tech regulation agreed in boost to consumer choice**

The EU institutions last night struck a major deal to regulate Big Tech through the Digital Markets Act (DMA) which should greatly benefit consumers by creating fairer and more competitive digital markets.

The DMA sets obligations and prohibitions for Big Tech companies to ensure they do not stifle innovative competitors or use unfair business practices, such as promoting their own services over the services of competitors or requiring the use of their digital payment service for app purchases. This legislation is significant because it will nip Big Tech's harmful practices in the bud, instead of waiting for harm to occur and then tackling it under competition law enforcement.

The prohibitions include preventing Big Tech gatekeepers from combining data collected through their core platform services with data collected from other sources, unless end users have given their consent after having been offered a less privacy-intrusive alternative. For example, Meta will be unable to combine data between its Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp services without meeting those requirements.

Consumers stand to benefit from the inclusion of interoperability for instant messaging in the DMA, which means that a Telegram or Signal user would be able to exchange messages with a WhatsApp user if WhatsApp's rivals decide to use this opportunity. The DMA will also give consumers genuine choice about which apps they want to use rather than allow Big Tech to steer consumers to their own products.

Ursula Pachtl, Deputy Director General at the European Consumer Organisation (BEUC) said:

"This is a big moment for consumers and businesses who have suffered from Big Tech's harmful practices. This legislation will rebalance digital markets, increase consumer choice and put an end to many of the worst practices that Big Tech has engaged in over the years. It is a landmark law for the EU's digital transformation. For example, Google must stop promoting its own local, travel or job services over those of competitors in Google Search results, while Apple will be unable to force users to use its payment service for app purchases.

"Consumers will also be able to collectively enforce their rights if a company breaks the rules in the Digital Markets Act. But Member States must now also provide the Commission with the necessary enforcement resources to step in the moment there is foul play."

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