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Crucial rules to rein in Big Tech and boost consumer choice to now become EU law

Ministers from EU countries have approved the Digital Markets Act (DMA), clearing the last hurdle before the rules become final.

The DMA is a vital set of obligations and prohibitions for Big Tech companies to ensure they do not stifle innovative competitors or use unfair business practices. The rules will create fairer and more competitive digital markets and give consumers greater choice and protection, for example over which apps and services they use.

Ursula Pacht, Deputy Director General of the European Consumer Organisation (BEUC), said: "Today marks a milestone in terms of rebalancing digital markets and stopping some of the worst anticompetitive practices by Big Tech in the EU. For too long, consumers have suffered from a lack of choice while Big Tech gamed different parts of the market to their advantage. Through this new EU legislation, consumers will now get a genuine choice about which apps or services they want to use rather than be steered toward Big Tech's own products."

"It is good news to hear that the Commission is planning to build a task force to implement and enforce the DMA. However, it is vital that the Commission can hire all the experts it needs, including behavioural scientists, data scientists and AI experts. If the Commission does not obtain the necessary in-house expertise and resources, the risk is that the DMA is hamstrung by ineffective enforcement and Big Tech is let off the hook."

Some of the DMA's rules include:

- The DMA will give consumers genuine choice about which apps they want to use rather than allow Big Tech to steer consumers to their own products. For example, Google must stop unfairly 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 in-app purchases.
- Big Tech gatekeepers will not be able to combine personal data of users 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 Telegram or Signal users would be able to exchange messages with a WhatsApp user if WhatsApp's rivals decide to use this interoperability opportunity.

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