

Contact: Johannes Kleis: +32 (0)2 789 24 01
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European Commission charges Android for abuse of dominant position

“It is good news that the European Commission is flexing its muscles on competition law. This has to happen if an EU digital economy is to serve consumers and innovative players. Competition rules apply regardless of the company’s country of origin. They are crucial to prevent companies from using their market power to the detriment of consumer choice and innovation.

“Google allegedly forces phone manufacturers using the Android operating system to pre-install Google’s applications and place them prominently. This is highly problematic. It makes the tech giant the gatekeeper of how millions of European consumers access and experience the digital world. Even more worrying is that the search giant uses Android to Hoover up enormous amounts of data which extends its overall internet dominance.

“There is a striking feeling of ‘dèjà vu’. This case resembles the Microsoft competition-saga a decade ago. Once again, a company is abusing its dominant position in the market by tying its products to its operating system. Google’s tying practices make it harder for consumers to access mobile apps of their choosing and strongly influence how consumers use their Android devices. This comes at a time when Google’s dominance in key segments of the digital economy and in the data ecosystem as a whole give it unparalleled power.

“We hope that the Commission will adopt a swift decision both in this case and in the ‘Google Search case’. Consumers need the digital economy to be competitive.”

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