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Date: 18/07/2018

Commission's Android decision is win for consumer choice and innovation in mobile markets

The European Commission today fined Google (Alphabet Int.) for breaking EU competition law in abusing its dominance in the market of mobile operating systems.¹ Google's Android is by far the most popular operating system among phone and tablets manufacturers, with a market share of more than 80% in Europe. Because of this market dominance, Google managed to restrict consumer choice and innovation by pushing its own products like Google Search and Chrome to the detriment of those of competitors.

While Google claims that Android is open source, and that anybody can use it, their contractual practices show the opposite: a highly controlled ecosystem in which Google takes all at the expense of consumers and competition.

The European Consumer Organisation (BEUC) strongly favours competition in the market for mobile operating systems, apps and search engines and therefore welcomes the Commission's decision as a necessary step to create a truly competitive digital landscape.² As consumers' lives become increasingly digitalised, consumers should be able to choose from a wide range of products rather than be confined to a handful of market players.

Monique Goyens, Director General of BEUC, comments:

"In competitive mobile markets, consumers should be able to make a meaningful choice between search engines and browsers and which apps they can download on their phones and tablets. Google misuses its market power to push its own products. This is a clear restriction of competition which hurts European consumers.

"Because of Android's dominance in the mobile market, it also impedes innovative, privacy-friendly services from succeeding. Google's business model consists in hoovering up people's personal data and its continued dominance means the privacy-invasive business model is here to stay.

"That Android is helpful for app developers, or that many consumers enjoy its stack of attractive services, does not justify an abuse of market power. In a healthy mobile market, consumers should be able to benefit from Google's services but also those developed by competing companies."

¹ http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-18-4581_en.htm

² BEUC is an interested third party in support of the Commission in its investigation against Android.

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