

PRESS RELEASE

EUROPEAN PRESS PUBLISHERS URGE THE COMMISSION TO STOP GOOGLE'S ABUSIVE PROMOTION OF ITS OWN SERVICES AND RESTORE COMPETITION TO THE DIGITAL ECONOMY

Publishers and their trade associations call for rejection of a flawed deal and to enforce EU competition law properly to the benefit of consumers, publishers and businesses

(European Commission's Competition Investigation of GOOGLE – AT.39.740)

Brussels, 4 September 2014 – Newspaper and magazine publishers across Europe have called on the European Commission to reject the third set of commitments by Google in the ongoing anti-trust investigation. The commitments would not stop Google's abusive promotion of its own services, but even formally approve this misuse by the search quasi-monopoly. Therefore, the commitments are wholly insufficient to restore competition, innovation and consumer choice to the digital market.

European press publishers are greatly concerned that the Commission still appears to be moving towards a settlement in the Google anti-trust case despite all evidence and clear warnings by European consumers and businesses that the proposed deal would clearly fail to remedy the serious competition concerns identified by the Commission.

President of the Federation of German Newspaper Publishers (BDZV), Helmut Heinen said: "Genuine and fair competition in the digital market are essential conditions for a thriving free and independent press sector that contributes to democratic debate all across Europe. Yet the current proposed commitments would have the reverse effect and effectively legalise Google's abusive self-preference. As a respected competition authority, the Commission must act decisively now and reject those commitments. It is time to enforce EU competition law properly putting an end to this anti-competitive conduct that is holding back the digital market in Europe to the detriment of consumers and businesses alike."

President of the German Magazine Publishers' Association (VDZ), Prof. Dr. Hubert Burda, said: "Should the European Commission approve of Google's proposals, this would result in a carte blanche to misuse a digital monopoly. 'Fair Search' with equal criteria for all websites is an essential prerequisite for the prosperous and pluralistic development of the European media and technology sector. However, the proposed commitments are the opposite of 'Fair Search'."

Speaking on behalf of the Spanish Association of Daily Newspapers (AEDE), Luis Enríquez, Consejero Delegado of VOCENTO, said; "This is a landmark case for the future evolution of the digital single market in Europe. I trust that the Commission will demand that Google provides equal search and display criteria for all websites and at the same time puts an end to the misuse of publishers' content."

Complainants from the Spanish and German newspaper and magazine publishing sectors, supported by the vast majority of European press publishers, strongly criticise the lack of credible solutions offered to date by Google. The publishers associations that are complainants in the case have formally commented on the proposed third set of commitments, following receipt of "pre-rejection letters" from the Commission.

European Commission Vice-President Joaquín Almunia announced in May 2014 his intention to finish this investigation with a decision by the College of Commissioner after the summer. The College of Commissioner has the power to reject the commitments decision and refer the matter to the next College of Commissioners due to take office at the beginning of November.

Further information regarding publishers' views on Google's third set of proposed commitments is attached in annex to this press release.

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The informal coalition consists of the formal complainants from the press sector: **Bundesverband Deutscher Zeitungsverleger (BDZV)**; **Verband Deutscher Zeitschriftenverleger (VDZ)**; **Asociación de Editores de Diarios Españoles (AEDE)**; and their European Associations: **European Magazine Media Association (EMMA)**; **European Newspaper Publishers' Association (ENPA)**; **European Publishers Council (EPC)**; and **Online Publishers Association Europe (OPA Europe)**.

Additional signatories are: **Aikakausmedia / Aikakauslehtien (AKM)**; **Association luxembourgeoise des éditeurs de journaux (ALEJ)**; **Asociación de Revistas de Información (ARI)**; **Asociación de Prensa Profesional y Contenidos Multimedia (ConeQtia)**; **Associação Portuguesa de Imprensa (APIMPRESA)**; **Athens Daily Newspaper Publishers' Association**; **Czech Publishers' Association (CPA)**; **Cyprus Newspaper & Magazine Publishers Association (CNMPA)**; **Danske Medier (Danish Media)**; **Fagpressen (The Norwegian Specialised Press Association)**; **Federazione Italiana Editori Giornali (FIEG)**; **Polish Chamber of Press Publishers (IWP)**; **Magazines Ireland**; **Mediebedriftenes Landsforening (MBL)**; **Media voor Vak en Wetenschap (MVW)**; **NDP Nieuwsmedia (NDP)**; **National Newspapers Of Ireland (NN)**; **The Newspaper Society (NS)**; **Austrian Special Interest Media Association (ÖZV)**; **Professional Publishers Association (PPA)**; **Sanomalehtien Liitto (SL)**; **SCHWEIZER MEDIEN**; **Sveriges Tidskrifter (SMPA)**; **The Swedish Media Publishers' Association (TU)**; **Union des Editeurs de la Presse Périodique (UPP)**; **Austrian Newspaper Association (VÖZ)**.