

Brussels launches antitrust probe into Google's digital ad tech practices

The European Commission announced on Tuesday that it has opened a new antitrust probe into Google to determine whether the American multinational is abusing its position when it comes to online digital advertising technologies.

[The Commission said](#) the investigation will assess “whether Google has violated EU competition rules by favouring its own online display advertising technology services in the so-called “ad tech” supply chain, to the detriment of competing providers of advertising technology services, advertisers and online publishers.”

It will focus on whether the company is stifling competition by restricting access to third parties to user data for advertising purposes on website and apps, while using that data itself.



- [Google fined €220m by French competition watchdog over online advertising market](#)
- [Italy fines Google €102 million for abuse of dominant position](#)

“Online advertising services are at the heart of how Google and publishers monetise their online services. Google collects data to be used for targeted advertising purposes, it sells advertising space and also acts as an online advertising intermediary,” Margrethe Vestager, the Commission’s Executive Vice President in charge of Competition, said in a statement.

“So Google is present at almost all levels of the supply chain

for online display advertising. We are concerned that Google has made it harder for rival online advertising services to compete in the so-called ad tech stack," she added.

According to the Commission, the spending on digital advertising in the EU in 2019 reached about €20 billion.

Euronews has reached out to Google for comment.

Earlier this month, Google was fined €220 by France's competition watchdog for favouring its own services in online advertising. The company said at the time that it agreed with some of the watchdog's recommendations and that it would roll out changes to its policy over the coming months.

Vestager has launched numerous antitrust investigation into tech giants over alleged misuses of dominant positions, slapping Google with multiple fines.

In March 2019, Brussels fined Google €1.49 billion for imposing restrictive clauses in contracts for third-party websites preventing Google's rivals from placing their search adverts on these websites.