

The Belgian Competition Authority confirms the opening of proceedings against Google in the online advertising sector

The Belgian Competition Authority (“BCA”) has opened proceedings against Google following reports relating to certain practices in the online advertising sector.

In the online advertising sector, advertisers wishing to promote their products, and publishers wishing to monetise advertising spaces on their websites, are connected through various intermediation services. Google supplies services on the different intermediation levels of the online advertising sector, including an ad exchange service, allowing the sale and purchase of advertising spaces (“AdX”) and services allowing advertisers to purchase advertising spaces (“Ad Buying Tools”).

Following a preliminary analysis of the information brought to the BCA’s attention and of evidence gathered by the Prosecution and Investigation Service on its own initiative, the Prosecutor general has concluded that there were serious indications of a possible infringement of competition rules prohibiting abuses of a dominant position (Article 102 TFEU and/or Article IV.2 of the Code of Economic Law (“CEL”)) and/or of economic dependence (Article IV.2/1 CEL), and therefore decided to open a formal investigation pursuant to Article IV.39, 2° CEL.

The practices in question relate in particular to the general terms and conditions of use of certain Google intermediation services, as well as possible differences of treatment in the supply of these services, to the detriment of users and/or competitors of Google’s services. These practices take place in the digital sector, which features among the BCA’s enforcement priorities.

The case bears the reference CONC-RPR-26-0004. The opening of proceedings does not prejudice the possible outcome of the investigation, which is still at a preliminary stage, and Google will be fully involved in the proceedings.

Conduct or practices that may constitute a breach of the Belgian and EU competition rules can be reported in a fast and secure way via the BCA’s reporting line accessible at www.bma-abc.be (see ‘[Report a competition issue?](#)’).

For more information, please contact:

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