EU: Google Submits New Proposals in Antitrust Case

JUERGEN BAETZ, Associated Press

Brussels (AP) — Google has submitted new proposals to address concerns by Europe's antitrust watchdog that the U.S. internet giant is stifling competition, the European Commission said Monday.

The new concessions offered by Google come two months after the Commission, which acts as the 28-bloc's antitrust authority, rejected the company's initial proposals as insufficient.

"We are analyzing it carefully," said Jonathan Todd, an EU Commission spokesman. "If we were satisfied with the proposals, then we could move toward a solution in the coming months," he added.

The Commission has been investigating Google Inc. for three years over whether it has been abusing its dominance in Europe to unfairly favor its own services. Google is looking to address those concerns mainly by changing how it displays search results.

Google Inc.'s search engine enjoys a near-monopoly in Europe with a market share of about 90 percent. That gives it a huge edge over competitors to promote its own services such as Google News, Google Maps or its shopping and flight search functions.

A group of complainants in the case — comprising Microsoft, TripAdvisor and other Google rivals — said it wasn't enough for the Commission alone to review the new proposals. Instead they said all parties involved in the case should be allowed to test them and provide the Commission with feedback — a process referred to as market test.

"Given the failure of Google to make a serious offer last time around, we believe it is necessary that customers and competitors of Google be consulted in a full, second market test," the FairSearch group said in a statement.

Al Verney, a spokesman for Google in Brussels, declined to discuss the new proposals but said the company continued to "work with the Commission to settle this case."

The EU Commission has often taken a harder line with U.S. tech companies than its American counterparts, the Federal Trade Commission and the Justice Department. Google, which is based in Mountain View, California, settled a similar antitrust complaint on its search business with the FTC in January without making any major concessions on how it runs its search engine.

___

Follow Juergen Baetz on Twitter at http://www.twitter.com/jbaetz [1]

Source URL (retrieved on *03/12/2014 - 7:12am*):
http://www.wirelessdesignmag.com/news/2013/09/eu-google-submits-new-proposals-antitrust-case

Links:
[1] http://www.twitter.com/jbaetz