

## CHRONOLOGY

### European Commission & the Complaints against Google

Updated 20 August 2021

Note: All numbered complaints regard search unless noted otherwise

[fairsearch.org/chronology](http://fairsearch.org/chronology)

KEY EVENTS	
<b>2009</b>	<p><b>November 3</b>, complaint 1: <a href="#">Foundem</a>, a price comparison website, files a search complaint against Google with the European Commission's Competition Directorate (DG Comp).</p>
<b>2010</b>	<p><b>January</b>, complaints to Germany: Federation of Germany Newspaper Publishers (BDZV); Association of German Magazine Publishers (VDZ); Ciao.de, a website and at that time a unit of Microsoft; and Euro-Cities, a website, file complaints with Germany's Bundeskartellamt against Google, Google legal filing <a href="#">discloses</a> (page 19).</p> <p><b>February 10</b>, complaints 2 and 3: Commission starts informal review of complaints 1, 2 and 3: European Commission tells Google they are reviewing complaints from Ciao (transferred from the Bundeskartellamt); Foundem; and ejustice.fr, the French legal search engine unit of 1plusV, Google <a href="#">tells</a> investors (page 22).</p> <p><b>October</b>, US, FairSearch launched: Expedia and TripAdvisor <a href="#">launch</a> Fairsearch.org.</p> <p><b>November and later</b>, complaints 4, 5: 1plusV, parent of Ejustice.fr, music search engine E-Musicpro.com, and culture search engine Eguides.fr; and German listing association VFT have filed complaints with DG Comp, Google <a href="#">tells</a> investors.</p> <p><b>November 30</b>, formal investigation: European Commission <a href="#">announces</a> the opening of formal proceedings against Google, to determine if search providers received unfavorable treatment in Google's unpaid and sponsored search results, combined with preferential placement for Google's own services.</p> <p><b>December</b>, complaints 6, 7, 8: BDZV, VDZ, and Euro-Cities complaints to Germany's Bundeskartellamt are transferred to the European Commission, Commission spokesman Jonathan Todd <a href="#">tells</a> The New York Times. Google later <a href="#">confirms</a> a filing with the European Commission, telling investors that BDZV and VDZ complained in 2012 (page 22).</p>
<b>2011</b>	<p><b>January 24</b>, complaint 9: Interactive Lab files a complaint about the Google advertising services, Adwords, it <a href="#">announces</a> in a blog.</p> <p><b>March 30</b>, complaint 10: Microsoft <a href="#">announces</a> it is filing a complaint on search.</p> <p><b>March 31</b>, complaints 11, 12, 13: DG Comp notifies Google of filings by Elfvoetbal.nl, Hot-Map.com and NNTP.it; also mentions Interactive Labs filing (see January 24 entry), Google <a href="#">says</a> in a notice to investors (page 22).</p>

	<p><b>March 31</b>, letter from complainants: A group of 11 complainants <a href="#">posts</a> an open letter to Almunia expressing concern about potential remedies.</p> <p><b>June 24</b>, U.S. action: Google <a href="#">announces</a> that it has received a formal notification from the U.S. Federal Trade Commission regarding an antitrust investigation.</p> <p><b>July 31</b>, complaint 14: Deal du Jour, French coupon website, files complaint Google Adsense online advertising service blocked it, Reuters <a href="#">reports</a>. Google <a href="#">tells</a> investors it was notified of complaint on August 30 (page 20).</p> <p><b>September 16</b>, official Google reply: Google files reply to allegations, it tells investors.</p> <p><b>September 21</b>, U.S.: Senate antitrust Subcommittee holds hearing on 'Power of Google'. Video available <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p><b>December</b>, complaint 15: Spanish Association of Daily Newspaper Publishers (AEDE) files a complaint, Google <a href="#">tells</a> investors (page 22).</p>
2012	<p><b>January 23</b>, complaint 16: Twenga online shopping platform of France files complaint, say Twenga and DG Comp, as <a href="#">reported</a> by Bloomberg, and a <a href="#">filing</a> by Google.</p> <p><b>March</b>, complaint 17: Odigeo, a travel company, files a complaint, Google <a href="#">reports</a> to investors (page 20).</p> <p><b>March</b>, complaint 18: Expedia, online travel company, files a complaint.</p> <p><b>April</b>, complaint 19: Trip Advisor says in a statement it has filed a complaint against Google because of "anti-competitive and unfair practices," Bloomberg <a href="#">reports</a>.</p> <p><b>April</b>, complaint 20: Streetmap, a mapping company, filed a complaint, Google <a href="#">reports</a> in a notice to investors (page 20).</p> <p><b>May 21</b>, Almunia announcement: Competition Commissioner Joaquín Almunia <a href="#">says</a> he will negotiate with Google and identifies four areas of concern, including search preferencing. Almunia will negotiate in the absence of a Statement of Objections.</p> <p><b>August</b>, complaint 21: Nextag, an online shopping comparison site, has filed its complaint about Google's conduct, Google <a href="#">reports</a> in a notice to investors (page 22).</p> <p><b>December 18</b>, Almunia meeting: Almunia meets with Eric Schmidt, executive chairman of Google, and then <a href="#">says</a> that they have "substantially reduced" differences on ways to address the four Commission concerns (see May 21 above).</p>
2013	<p><b>January 3</b>, U.S.: Google and the U.S. Federal Trade Commission announce an <a href="#">agreement</a> on standards essential patents, and the FTC drops its investigation about search.</p> <p><b>January 30</b>, complaint 22: ICOMP, a coalition of internet companies, <a href="#">announces</a> a complaint that Google first achieved dominance through unlawful means.</p>

**February 26**, complaint 23: [Visual Meta](#), German shopping comparison site owned by Axel Springer, files complaint saying Google abused competitors, Mlex reports. Company signs March 21 letter below.

**March 21**, complainants letter: Eleven complainants tell Almunia in an [open letter](#) that Google must end promotion of its own services and the demotion of others.

**March 21**, [FairSearch statement](#): urging decisive action by the European Commission.

**March 25**, complaint 1: FairSearch files [mobile complaint](#) laying out Google's anti-competitive strategy to dominate the mobile marketplace through its Android OS. Becomes public April 9.

**April 3**, first Google commitments: Google offers first package of [commitments](#) to address the preliminary competition concerns identified by the European Commission.

**April 26**, market test: The European Commission announces its required [market test](#) of the first commitments offered by Google. Initial deadline is May 27, subsequently extended to June 26.

**June**, complaint 24: Contaxe, a Swiss online advertising service, [announces](#) its first antitrust complaint against Google. See May 25, 2014, for second complaint.

**June**, mobile complaint 2: Seznam files [mobile complaint](#) laying out Google's anti-competitive strategy to dominate the mobile marketplace through its Android OS.

**June 27**, complaint 25: Impala, a group of independent music companies, [files](#) a complaint asserting that Google subsidiary YouTube is abusing its dominant position.

**July 9**, first Google commitments rejected: Almunia [asks](#) Google to improve significantly its first package of commitments.

**July 17**, [FairSearch survey](#): showing how Google's commitment offer makes for an unlevel playing field.

**October 1**, second Google commitments: Google offers a second package of commitments, the [European Commission announces](#).

**October 1**, [FairSearch statement](#): on the second package of proposed Google commitments.

**October 28**, [FairSearch statement](#): urging Google to make public its proposed commitments.

**November 14**, complaint 26: CEPIC, an image rights association, [announces](#) complaint saying that Google makes unauthorized use of third-party images.

**December 12**, [FairSearch statement](#): on expert report by Professors D. Franklyn and D. Hyman that Google proposed remedies send up to 40 times more traffic to own

	<p>links than those of others. <a href="#">Full Report by Franklyn and Hyman.</a></p> <p><b>December 20</b>, second Google commitments rejected: Almunia tells Spanish radio he is rejecting second package of commitments, the Guardian <a href="#">reports</a> based on a partial transcript provided by the European Commission.</p>
<p>2014</p>	<p><b>February 5</b>, third Google commitments: Almunia <a href="#">announces</a> new proposed remedies from Google that he says are capable of addressing competition concerns. There will be no third round of market tests, because complainants will get “pre-rejection letters” to which they may reply before their complaints are finally rejected.</p> <p><b>February 5</b>, Android review: In <a href="#">the same speech</a>, Almunia says the Commission is “looking at allegations relating to the Android operating system.”</p> <p><b>February 5</b>, FairSearch Europe: spokesman Thomas Vinje <a href="#">says</a> the third Google commitments are worse than nothing.</p> <p><b>February 12</b>, FairSearch: <a href="#">urges</a> European Commission to make Google proposal public.</p> <p><b>March 31</b>, complaint 27 : BEUC, a coalition of European consumer associations, <a href="#">announces</a> a complaint against Google saying it provides biased search results.</p> <p><b>April</b>, complaint 1, non-classified: NewsCorp files first complaint (See April 2016)</p> <p><b>May 13</b>, FairSearch <a href="#">statement</a>: on Vice President Almunia’s op ed in FAZ.</p> <p><b>May 25</b>, complaint 28: Contaxe, a Swiss provider of online advertising services, <a href="#">announces</a> its second antitrust complaint against Google.</p> <p><b>May</b>, complaint 29: <a href="#">Open Internet Project</a>, a group representing small business, startups and digital rights, files a complaint.</p> <p><b>May</b>, complaint 30: Deutsche Telekom says it has filed a complaint, <a href="#">Handelsblatt reports</a></p> <p><b>May 30</b>, complaint 31: Yelp , an online review site, says will file complaint to European Commission; objects to proposed Google settlement, <a href="#">New York Times</a> reports. See July 9, below.</p> <p><b>June 16</b>, mobile complaint 3: Portugal’s <a href="#">Aptoide files</a> mobile complaint.</p> <p><b>May – June</b>, state of play meetings: European Commission tells complainants at “state of play” meetings that their complaints will be rejected, because Google’s third commitments proposal corrects its abuses.</p> <p><b>June – July</b>, pre-rejection letters: European Commission follows state of play meetings with formal pre-rejection letters outlining its position, complaint by complainant.</p> <p><b>July – August</b>, complainants response: Complainants respond to pre-rejection letters,</p>

permitting them to contest the Commission position and to bring new facts to light.

**July 9**, Yelp complaint too late for complainants pre-response, Almunia tells a news conference on [video](#) at 36:01. However, complaint stands.

**August**, complaint 32: [HolidayCheck](#), a Swiss travel portal, files a complaint, [FAZ](#) reports.

**September 8**, FairSearch [statement](#): Welcomes Vice President Almunia's view that Google's third package of proposed commitments is inadequate.

**September 23**, third Google commitments rejected: Almunia [tells Parliament](#) that Google must improve its offer or face a Statement of Objections.

**October 14**, FairSearch Europe: [Letter](#) to Google's Eric Schmidt asserts there are false claims in his [Berlin Speech](#).

**November 1**, Margrethe Vestager of Denmark becomes Competition Commissioner.

**November 27**, European Parliament : Parliament passes a [resolution](#) asking the Commission to "consider proposals aimed at unbundling search engines from other commercial services", universally interpreted as being aimed at Google.

**December**, meetings: Vestager begins meeting with complainants.

2015

**January – February**, meetings: Vestager meets with additional complainants.

**February 27**, [Fairsearch Blog](#): Questions for Google's Eric Schmidt in advance of his meeting with Vestager.

**March 2**, meeting: Vestager meets Schmidt, according to the European Commission.

**March 19**, U.S. FTC staff report: Wall Street Journal publishes link to internal U.S. Federal Trade Commission [staff report](#) labeling Google as an abusive monopolist and recommending charges under the Sherman Act. Three FTC commissioners [disagree](#). Google [criticises](#) the Wall Street Journal. FairSearch blog [analyses](#) the staff report.

**April 15**, SO and mobile case: Competition Commissioner Vestager holds a [recorded news conference](#) where she reads a [statement](#), as the Commission issues a [press release](#) and fact sheets concerning: 1) [Statement of Objections on search](#) saying Google favours its own comparison shopping products in general search, and 2) opening of a [formal investigation on Android](#) saying Google abuses its dominance on mobile operating systems.

**April 15**, FairSearch, Google: FairSearch issues a [statement](#) by Thomas Vinje. Google issues two blogs, one on [search](#) and the other on [Android](#), and later [apologises](#) to The Guardian over errors in the search blog. Later, Foundem provides a [comprehensive response](#) to Google on search.

**April 16**, speech: Vestager Washington, DC, [speech](#) gives rationale for decision.

	<p><b>June 1</b>, mobile complaint 4: <a href="#">Disconnect, Inc.</a>, an app maker, <a href="#">complains Google</a> abused its dominance by favouring its own security software</p> <p><b>June 22</b>, search case interested party: <a href="#">Getty Images says</a> Commission grants it “interested party” status and that Google exclusionary actions hurt its business</p> <p><b>June</b>, Yelp study: Tim Wu, Michael Luca and Yelp release research study, <a href="#">“Is Google degrading search? Consumer Harm from Universal Search”</a> . A <a href="#">video</a> makes the key points well and a <a href="#">website</a> has downloadable code to improve Google.</p> <p><b>August 27</b>, Google files its reply to the Statement of Objections and issues a <a href="#">blog post</a> giving its position, followed by a <a href="#">blog in response</a> from FairSearch</p> <p><b>November 13</b>, mobile complaint 5: <a href="#">Yandex</a>, of Russia, <a href="#">says</a> rival search engine Google abuses dominance by in effect forcing Android phone makers to install Google search</p>
2016	<p><b>April 18</b>, complaint 33: News Corp <a href="#">files</a> second complaint, on search (See April 2014)</p> <p><b>April 20</b>, SO and Android case: Competition Commissioner Vestager <a href="#">announces</a> an SO in the Android case -- recorded on <a href="#">video</a> – and issues a <a href="#">press release</a> and <a href="#">fact sheet</a>. Google <a href="#">disagrees</a> with Commission; FairSearch <a href="#">applauds</a> it.</p> <p><b>April 27</b>, Getty Images <a href="#">files</a> formal complaint that Google scraped its sites. (See Feb. 9, 2018, when Getty and Google reach deal and complaint is withdrawn)</p> <p><b>July 14</b>, European Commission issues <a href="#">two new Statements of Objections</a>, one a supplemental SO to reinforce its search case and the second on advertising, asserting the company restricted third-party Websites from displaying search advertisements from competitors. Vestager makes a <a href="#">statement</a>, also available on <a href="#">video</a>, and FairSearch <a href="#">comments</a>.</p>
2017	<p><b>March 6</b>, mobile complaint 6: Open Internet Project files a <a href="#">complaint</a> that Google abused its dominance by imposing restrictions on Android device makers and mobile network operators.</p> <p><b>June 27, Shopping decision</b>: Competition Commissioner Margrethe Vestager announces €2.4 billion fine and remedies against Google for abuse of dominance at a televised <a href="#">news conference</a>, issues <a href="#">press release</a> and <a href="#">fact sheet</a>.</p> <p><b>June 27</b>, search case reaction: FairSearch issues <a href="#">statement</a>, <a href="#">backgrounder</a> and holds a televised <a href="#">news conference</a> on the decision; Google general counsel Kent Walker <a href="#">issues a blog</a> with company decision.</p> <p><b>September 11</b>, Google <a href="#">appeals</a> to the European Union General Court to nullify the Commission decision in the Search case.</p> <p><b>August 29</b>, Google submits remedies in the search case to the European Commission</p> <p><b>September 28</b>, Remedies scheduled to take effect</p> <p><b>December</b>, FairSearch requests intervenor status in the Google appeal to the EU</p>

	General Court, from the shopping case decision against it. (See December 2018)
<b>2018</b>	<p><b>February 9,</b> Getty Images <a href="#">announces</a> it has reached a licensing agreement with Google images. Complaint to be withdrawn.</p> <p><b>July 18, Android Decision:</b> European Commission <a href="#">finds</a> that Google used illegal business practices to “cement its dominant position in general internet search”, imposing remedies and a fine of €4.3 billion. Commissioner Margrethe Vestager holds a <a href="#">press conference</a> and then answers <a href="#">questions</a>. FairSearch <a href="#">reacts</a>, putting out a press kit, and Google CEO Sundar Pichai writes a <a href="#">blog</a>. Full decision <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p><b>October 9,</b> Google <a href="#">appeals</a> to the European Union General Court to nullify the Commission decision in the Android case.</p> <p><b>December,</b> EU General Court denies FairSearch intervenor status in the shopping case appeal (See December 2017)</p>
<b>2019</b>	<p><b>January,</b> FairSearch requests intervenor status in the Google appeal to the EU General Court, from the Android case decision against it.</p> <p><b>March 20, Advertising decision:</b> Commission <a href="#">announces</a> fine of €1.49 billion for abuse practices in online advertising.</p> <p><b>April 18,</b> Google <a href="#">announces</a> choice screen for Android, comparing it to Microsoft’s choice screen. FairSearch spokesman Thomas Vinje <a href="#">says</a> the remedy is ineffective and bears no resemblance to the Microsoft solution, because it defaults to Google Android’s own apps.</p>
<b>2020</b>	<b>February 12 - 14,</b> European Union General Court hearing on shopping case held in Luxembourg
<b>2021</b>	<b>September 27 – October 1,</b> European Union General Court hearing on Android case scheduled in Luxembourg.