

CHRONOLOGY
European Commission & the Complaints against Google
Updated 10 November 2021
Note: All numbered complaints regard search unless noted otherwise

fairsearch.org/chronology

KEY EVENTS	
2009	<p>November 3, complaint 1: Foundem, a price comparison website, files a search complaint against Google with the European Commission’s Competition Directorate (DG Comp).</p>
2010	<p>January, 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 discloses (page 19).</p> <p>February 10, 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 tells investors (page 22).</p> <p>October, US, FairSearch launched: Expedia and TripAdvisor launch Fairsearch.org.</p> <p>November and later, 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 tells investors.</p> <p>November 30, formal investigation: European Commission announces 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>December, complaints 6, 7, 8: BDZV, VDZ, and Euro-Cities complaints to Germany’s Bundeskartellamt are transferred to the European Commission, Commission spokesman Jonathan Todd tells The New York Times. Google later confirms a filing with the European Commission, telling investors that BDZV and VDZ complained in 2012 (page 22).</p>
2011	<p>January 24, complaint 9: Interactive Lab files a complaint about the Google advertising services, Adwords, it announces in a blog.</p> <p>March 30, complaint 10: Microsoft announces it is filing a complaint on search.</p> <p>March 31, 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 says in a notice to investors (page 22).</p>

	<p>March 31, letter from complainants: A group of 11 complainants posts an open letter to Almunia expressing concern about potential remedies.</p> <p>June 24, U.S. action: Google announces that it has received a formal notification from the U.S. Federal Trade Commission regarding an antitrust investigation.</p> <p>July 31, complaint 14: Deal du Jour, French coupon website, files complaint Google Adsense online advertising service blocked it, Reuters reports. Google tells investors it was notified of complaint on August 30 (page 20).</p> <p>September 16, official Google reply: Google files reply to allegations, it tells investors.</p> <p>September 21, U.S.: Senate antitrust Subcommittee holds hearing on 'Power of Google'. Video available here.</p> <p>December, complaint 15: Spanish Association of Daily Newspaper Publishers (AEDE) files a complaint, Google tells investors (page 22).</p>
2012	<p>January 23, complaint 16: Twenga online shopping platform of France files complaint, say Twenga and DG Comp, as reported by Bloomberg, and a filing by Google.</p> <p>March, complaint 17: Odigeo, a travel company, files a complaint, Google reports to investors (page 20).</p> <p>March, complaint 18: Expedia, online travel company, files a complaint.</p> <p>April, complaint 19: Trip Advisor says in a statement it has filed a complaint against Google because of "anti-competitive and unfair practices," Bloomberg reports.</p> <p>April, complaint 20: Streetmap, a mapping company, filed a complaint, Google reports in a notice to investors (page 20).</p> <p>May 21, Almunia announcement: Competition Commissioner Joaquín Almunia says 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>August, complaint 21: Nextag, an online shopping comparison site, has filed its complaint about Google's conduct, Google reports in a notice to investors (page 22).</p> <p>December 18, Almunia meeting: Almunia meets with Eric Schmidt, executive chairman of Google, and then says that they have "substantially reduced" differences on ways to address the four Commission concerns (see May 21 above).</p>
2013	<p>January 3, U.S.: Google and the U.S. Federal Trade Commission announce an agreement on standards essential patents, and the FTC drops its investigation about search.</p> <p>January 30, complaint 22: ICOMP, a coalition of internet companies, announces 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. Full Report by Franklyn and Hyman.</p> <p>December 20, second Google commitments rejected: Almunia tells Spanish radio he is rejecting second package of commitments, the Guardian reports based on a partial transcript provided by the European Commission.</p>
<p>2014</p>	<p>February 5, third Google commitments: Almunia announces 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>February 5, Android review: In the same speech, Almunia says the Commission is “looking at allegations relating to the Android operating system.”</p> <p>February 5, FairSearch Europe: spokesman Thomas Vinje says the third Google commitments are worse than nothing.</p> <p>February 12, FairSearch: urges European Commission to make Google proposal public.</p> <p>March 31, complaint 27 : BEUC, a coalition of European consumer associations, announces a complaint against Google saying it provides biased search results.</p> <p>April, complaint 1, non-classified: NewsCorp files first complaint (See April 2016)</p> <p>May 13, FairSearch statement: on Vice President Almunia’s op ed in FAZ.</p> <p>May 25, complaint 28: Contaxe, a Swiss provider of online advertising services, announces its second antitrust complaint against Google.</p> <p>May, complaint 29: Open Internet Project, a group representing small business, startups and digital rights, files a complaint.</p> <p>May, complaint 30: Deutsche Telekom says it has filed a complaint, Handelsblatt reports</p> <p>May 30, complaint 31: Yelp , an online review site, says will file complaint to European Commission; objects to proposed Google settlement, New York Times reports. See July 9, below.</p> <p>June 16, mobile complaint 3: Portugal’s Aptoide files mobile complaint.</p> <p>May – June, 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>June – July, pre-rejection letters: European Commission follows state of play meetings with formal pre-rejection letters outlining its position, complaint by complainant.</p> <p>July – August, 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>June 1, mobile complaint 4: Disconnect, Inc., an app maker, complains Google abused its dominance by favouring its own security software</p> <p>June 22, search case interested party: Getty Images says Commission grants it “interested party” status and that Google exclusionary actions hurt its business</p> <p>June, Yelp study: Tim Wu, Michael Luca and Yelp release research study, “Is Google degrading search? Consumer Harm from Universal Search” . A video makes the key points well and a website has downloadable code to improve Google.</p> <p>August 27, Google files its reply to the Statement of Objections and issues a blog post giving its position, followed by a blog in response from FairSearch</p> <p>November 13, mobile complaint 5: Yandex, of Russia, says rival search engine Google abuses dominance by in effect forcing Android phone makers to install Google search</p>
2016	<p>April 18, complaint 33: News Corp files second complaint, on search (See April 2014)</p> <p>April 20, SO and Android case: Competition Commissioner Vestager announces an SO in the Android case -- recorded on video – and issues a press release and fact sheet. Google disagrees with Commission; FairSearch applauds it.</p> <p>April 27, Getty Images files formal complaint that Google scraped its sites. (See Feb. 9, 2018, when Getty and Google reach deal and complaint is withdrawn)</p> <p>July 14, European Commission issues two new Statements of Objections, 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 statement, also available on video, and FairSearch comments.</p>
2017	<p>March 6, mobile complaint 6: Open Internet Project files a complaint that Google abused its dominance by imposing restrictions on Android device makers and mobile network operators.</p> <p>June 27, Shopping decision: Competition Commissioner Margrethe Vestager announces €2.4 billion fine and remedies against Google for abuse of dominance at a televised news conference, issues press release and fact sheet.</p> <p>June 27, search case reaction: FairSearch issues statement, backgrounder and holds a televised news conference on the decision; Google general counsel Kent Walker issues a blog with company decision.</p> <p>September 11, Google appeals to the European Union General Court to nullify the Commission decision in the Search case.</p> <p>August 29, Google submits remedies in the search case to the European Commission</p> <p>September 28, Remedies scheduled to take effect</p> <p>December, FairSearch requests intervenor status in the Google appeal to the EU</p>

	General Court, from the shopping case decision against it. (See December 2018)
2018	<p>February 9, Getty Images announces it has reached a licensing agreement with Google images. Complaint to be withdrawn.</p> <p>July 18, Android Decision: European Commission finds 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 press conference and then answers questions. FairSearch reacts, putting out a press kit, and Google CEO Sundar Pichai writes a blog. Full decision here.</p> <p>October 9, Google appeals to the European Union General Court to nullify the Commission decision in the Android case.</p> <p>December, EU General Court denies FairSearch intervenor status in the shopping case appeal (See December 2017)</p>
2019	<p>January, FairSearch requests intervenor status in the Google appeal to the EU General Court, from the Android case decision against it.</p> <p>March 20, Advertising decision: Commission announces fine of €1.49 billion for abuse practices in online advertising.</p> <p>April 18, Google announces choice screen for Android, comparing it to Microsoft’s choice screen. FairSearch spokesman Thomas Vinje says the remedy is ineffective and bears no resemblance to the Microsoft solution, because it defaults to Google Android’s own apps.</p>
2020	February 12 - 14 , European Union General Court hearing on shopping case held in Luxembourg
2021	<p>September 27 – October 1, European Union General Court hearing on Android case scheduled in Luxembourg.</p> <p>November 11, European Union General Court rules in favour of the European Commission in the Google shopping case, T-612/17, issuing a press release and decision that largely dismiss Google’s arguments. FairSearch commends the Court on its decision.</p>