

Press release

Antitrust abuse proceedings open against Google News Showcase following a complaint by Corint Media

Proceedings by the Federal Cartel Office strengthen effective enforcement
of appropriate remuneration for press publishers' ancillary rights.

Berlin, 04.06.2021. A probe into the news platform Google News Showcase was launched today by the German Federal Cartel Office after an announcement that it has initiated proceedings against Google for the abuse of its dominant market position. The procedure relies not only on existing bans for abusive practices but also on new laws that regulate companies with paramount significance for competition across markets (§ 19a GWB). These rules allow for more effective and faster action against practices that restrict competition, especially by large digital corporations.

The proceedings were launched after a complaint was filed with the Federal Cartel Office by Corint Media in October last year, which outlined Google's various violations of the ban on abusive practices:

- The Google News Showcase service and its integration into other Google services, in particular Google's search engine, is clearly designed to focus users' attention on the new Google-owned news service and its press content. This exploits Google's quasi-monopolistic position in the search engine market in an abusive manner to the detriment of press publishers not participating in the service.
- Equally, the press publisher contracts underpinning the service are designed in such a way that they make it impossible for publishers to enforce appropriate remuneration for use of their content, as intended by recent legislation to protect press publishers' ancillary rights.

Corint Media welcomes the fact that the German Federal Cartel Office has taken up this complaint and is subjecting Google's conduct to an antitrust investigation. In Corint Media's view, Google's behaviour not only represents a serious restriction of competition to the detriment of press publishers but also endangers the economic foundations of the free press.

Christoph Schwennicke and Markus Runde, CEO of Corint Media:

"Following the justified redefinition of the legal framework between content providers and content-using platforms – on both a European and national scale – through the amendment of antitrust law and the introduction of ancillary rights for press publishers, the opening of these proceedings is the next important

step for the concrete application of the law. Global tech companies also have to operate within the legal and regulatory frameworks that we have established in non-violent democracies. Violations of these legal frameworks require systematic processing and prosecution.”