

EUROPÄISCHES PARLAMENT

Mitglied des Europäischen Parlaments

To
Vice-President
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Brussels, 14. Oktober 2013

Dear Vice-President,
Dear Mr Almunia,

Following the hearing in the European Parliament on the Google-case, we would first of all like to thank you for your participation. We are very glad that you took the time to inform us about the on-going reflections in the European Commission and to outline – for the first time – the new commitments proposed by Google. We would like to congratulate you for your achievements as regards the cooperation with Google so far and hope that the commitments in discussion will ensure competition in this crucial sector of Europe's economy.

In the follow-up to the discussions that have taken place during the hearing we would like to inform you about our main findings.

1. We believe that ensuring competition in the online search market will benefit not only consumers and innovation, but that it is also essential for building a vibrant digital economy, and indeed, strengthening the European economy as a whole. A competitive search market can ensure consumers' choice and stimulate the businesses to innovate in order to meet a growing demand for diverse and improved products and services.

2. Although we have not yet got a comprehensive understanding of the content of Google's proposals, we support - given the importance of search engines for a fair development of the digital single market - consumers and the other stakeholders in their demand that effective remedies have to be based on the principle of non-discrimination. That means that Google shall apply the same rules regarding search results ranking for third party's services as for Google's own services. The best option

to challenge Google's dominance and ensure a competitive search market is the existence of strong competitors – we hope that the settlement is designed to achieve this objective.

3. We furthermore believe that only a formal market test can provide the “concrete technical elements on the effectiveness of the proposed package [of remedies]” that you called for in your presentation at the conference. Getting such evidence will take time; therefore we share the general concern that at this stage of the investigation it is much more important to take the necessary time to reach effective commitments rather than to rush to an inadequate or even emphatically harmful settlement.

4. We support your position that there are good reasons to prefer a settlement that can be implemented soon to a long lasting procedure that may be difficult for some internet businesses to wait and might not change any anticompetitive practices in the meantime. However, when the second market test fails to endorse the settlement's effectiveness, the change of procedure to an Article 7 procedure should be considered.

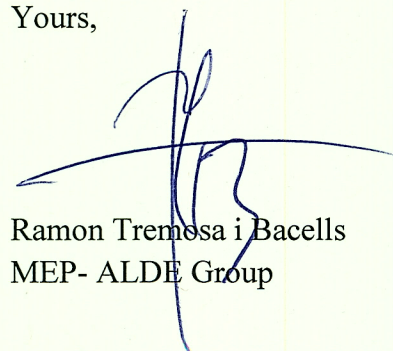
5. It is essential for us that the European Commission can seriously enforce the different modalities of the settlement, especially as this case is of concern to our societies as a whole. For this reason, we welcome your suggestion of appointing an independent trustee.

6. This case touches upon a broader societal issue: Nearly any kind of digital interaction makes users nowadays an object. Collecting information has become a value – pure money – in itself, as it discloses a deep knowledge about our societies and individuals. Such knowledge and moreover, the power to provide people with chosen information should not remain with one innovative, yet dominating company, but rather be used for the interest of all – in a competitive manner.

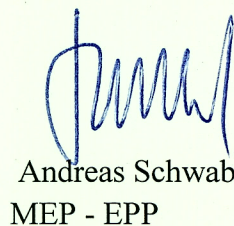
Again we thank you for your participation at the conference and we look forward to a good cooperation in the future.

Sincerely

Yours,



Ramon Tremosa i Bacells
MEP- ALDE Group



Andreas Schwab
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