

European press publishers: Google is not entitled to suppress nor set the value of journalistic information “Made in Europe”

European press publishers firmly reject Google’s [alleged findings](#) regarding the relevance and value for the company of European journalistic content in Search – the result of Google’s unilaterally imposed, unnotified and democratically unacceptable “[experiment](#)”, ran in 8 EU countries since last November. During that time press content, in a sheer demonstration of brutal leveraging, was removed by Google from its services for an estimated 2 million European citizens.

Rather than seeking to provide any meaningful insights on the European press’ real contribution to the success of Google, a digital gatekeeper under the EU Digital Markets Act, the company assessed the value of press content based on untransparent criteria and parameters set by and for itself. In doing so, Google undermined the legitimate claims of press publishers – hereby now directly accused by Google of “overestimating” the value of European press content – who aim to secure fair remuneration in the ongoing negotiations across Europe under EU copyright law. It comes to no surprise that the Competition Authority in France, which had identified the risk of retaliation by Google, had prohibited the gatekeeper from delisting publishers’ content so as to safeguard a fair negotiation process. This intervention by the Authority proved instrumental to enable French magazine publishers, through their national association, to secure in court the suspension of Google’s test in France.

Crucially, this unfolds amid Google’s development of a business model that feeds on the content of press publishers to deliver the next generation of digital services driven by artificial intelligence, without authorisation or remuneration.

Google’s unilateral and undemocratic actions under its experiment have threatened the financial sustainability of a European free press and exposed them to unacceptable harm in the digital economy.

It also bluntly demonstrates the ability of a dominant company like Google to obstruct at will EU citizens’ right to access journalistic information, thereby directly affecting the quality of democratic debate across Europe – all the more critical at a time of widespread interference with and manipulation of information and public opinion.

For all these reasons, such an exercise of brutal leveraging must not be allowed to ever happen again. Therefore, European press publishers call on EU decision makers to take urgent and comprehensive measures to hold Google fully accountable for its actions in accordance with democratic principles, using all mechanisms available under EU law.