

Amazon strikes deal with EU to close anti-trust probes

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Under the agreement, Amazon will no longer analyse non-public data from third-party sellers on its platform and will treat all sellers equally when deciding which offer to put in the best screen location.

Online retail giant Amazon has reached an agreement with the European

Commission to close two inquiries into anti-competitive tactics, notably using third-party seller data to improve its own sales.

EU vice-president Margrethe Vestager announced Amazon's commitments and hailed them as a victory for smaller retailers selling products on Amazon's online marketplace.

Amazon, and its software, will be forbidden from analysing non-public third-party seller data, and will treat all sellers equally when deciding which offer to put in the best screen location.

Sellers will also be allowed to choose their own delivery firm, rather than being obliged to use the service chosen by Amazon's "Prime" premium service.

"And this means that by next summer. Amazon will have to end any preferential treatment towards its own retail and logistics operations in Europe," Vestager told reporters.

"So today's decision sets the rules that Amazon will need to play by in the future, instead of Amazon determining these rules for all players on his platform," she said.

"With these new rules competing independent retailers, carriers and European customers, well, they will have more opportunity and more choice."

An Amazon spokesperson said the firm, which operates the world's biggest online store, was pleased to have responded to the European Commission's concerns.

"While we continue to disagree with several of the preliminary conclusions the European Commission made, we have engaged

constructively to ensure that we can continue to serve customers across Europe and support the 225,000 European small and medium-sized businesses selling through our stores," the spokesperson said.

Vestager's investigators were concerned that Amazon was tracking sales by private retailers using its platform to identify lucrative markets and target its own offers.

They also accused Amazon of favouritism is deciding which offers appear in the "Buy Box", the most prominent panel on a product's web page with a one-click buying option that accounts for the vast majority of sales.

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