

Spain hits Apple, Amazon with 194-mn-euro antitrust fine

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Spain's competition watchdog said a deal limiting resellers of Apple products on Amazon's website restricted competition, while the companies said it was aimed at reducing counterfeit goods.

Spain's competition watchdog said Tuesday it has slapped US tech giants Amazon and Apple with fines totalling 194 million euros (\$218 million) for collusion in the sale of products.

The two firms had agreed to limit the sale of Apple products on Amazon's Spanish websites by third-party resellers "which restricted competition," the regulator said in a statement.

Contractual provisions of a 2018 agreement between the companies meant only selected resellers picked by Apple were allowed to sell Apple products on Amazon.es, it added.

"Over 90 percent of resellers who used Amazon's website in Spain to sell Apple products were excluded from Spain's main online market," the statement said.

The move "drastically" reduced competition between resellers of Apple products on Amazon's Spanish platform, it added.

The result was an increase in the prices of Apple devices sold on Amazon.

The authority imposed a fine of 50.5 million euros on Amazon and 143.6 million euros on Apple.

The companies said at the time they reached their agreement to ensure all Apple products offered for sale on Amazon were genuine, after a number of counterfeit products were discovered.

Apple said it would appeal regulator's decision.

"To protect users from security, safety, and quality risks created by counterfeit products, we have rules in place that have effectively

reduced counterfeiting," a company spokesperson told AFP.

Tech giants like Apple and Amazon have been fined several times in recent years in Europe for violating competition laws.

Italy hit Amazon with a fine of 1.1 billion euros in December 2021 for abusing its dominant market position while France slapped Apple with a fine of 371.6 million in October 2022.

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