

EU probes AliExpress to examine curbs on illegal products

November 6 2023, by Raziye AKKOC



The European Commission said it had sent a formal request for information to AliExpress.

The EU on Monday announced an investigation into Chinese e-commerce giant AliExpress, seeking more details on what measures it is taking to protect consumers online from illegal products, including fake

medicines.

The European Commission said it had sent a formal request for information to AliExpress, owned by Alibaba, in what is a first step in a process under a new EU new law, the Digital Services Act (DSA), that aims to counter the spread of illegal goods and content online.

It said it wanted to know more about how AliExpress will "comply with obligations related to risk assessments and mitigation measures to protect consumers online, in particular with regard to the dissemination of [illegal products](#) online such as fake medicines".

AliExpress has until November 27 to respond.

The European Union has developed a powerful armory to challenge the might of Big Tech with its milestone DSA and a sister law, the Digital Markets Act, that hits web giants with strict curbs, obligations and oversight on how they do business.

The DSA came into effect in August for 19 "very large" platforms, including AliExpress, Facebook and Instagram, that have more than 45 million monthly European users.

The EU has already started probes into Meta, TikTok and X (formerly Twitter), requesting more details about how they have acted against disinformation.

Platforms face fines that can go up to six percent of global turnover for violations.

The EU's top tech enforcer, Thierry Breton, stressed that the DSA was not just about countering hate speech and disinformation online.

"It is also there to ensure removal of illegal or unsafe products sold in the EU via e-commerce platforms, including the growing number of fake and potentially life-threatening medicines and pharmaceuticals sold online," Breton said.

Fake weight-loss drugs

Amazon Store, Google Shopping and clothing retailer Zalando are also among the 19 platforms named by the EU.

Amazon and Zalando have launched [legal challenges](#) against being designated on the list.

The DSA stipulates that online shopping sites must verify the identity of vendors before allowing them on their platforms and block repeat fraudsters.

The rules say online marketplaces may be held responsible for any damage from products bought by users that are non-compliant or dangerous.

The European Medicines Agency last week warned fake injection pens of Ozempic, a wildly popular diabetes drug that went viral on [social media](#) as a way to lose weight, were circulating in Europe.

A 2022 report by Europol and the European Union Intellectual Property Office warned of an increase in counterfeit goods shipped into the EU via small parcels.

"This notable increase is related to the growth in online marketplaces," it said.

According to the [report](#), the production of fake goods and their sale were

heavily reliant on [online platforms](#), social media and instant messaging services.

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