

Spanish media file 550-mn-euro lawsuit against Meta

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A group representing over 80 Spanish media outlets on Monday filed a 550-million-euro (\$600 million) lawsuit against Instagram-owner Meta for allegedly violating European Union regulations on personal data

protection.

Meta, which also owns Facebook and WhatsApp, extracts [personal information](#) from its users and sells it on to advertisers but has long struggled to provide a justification for the practice that satisfies EU data privacy laws.

Spain's AMI newspaper publishing association said Meta's "systematic" use of personal data from users of its platforms between May 2022 and July 2023 violated EU rules requiring companies get consent from users to use their [personal data](#) for advertising.

This practice created unfair competition in the advertising market since the US tech giant was able to offer personalized ads that constitute [unfair competition](#) using data its "obtained illegitimately", the association said in a statement explaining the lawsuit filed in a commercial court.

The association groups Spain's main media firms such as Prisa, the publisher of top-selling daily newspaper El Pais and Vocento, the owner of conservative daily ABC.

Meta has "built its [dominant position](#) in the advertising market by disregarding the regulations" concerning [personal data protection](#), thus causing "obvious damage to Spanish media to the point of putting their sustainability at risk", AMI president Jose Joly said in the statement.

Contacted by AFP, Meta did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The company last month began offering a paid no ads subscription service in Europe for Instagram and Facebook which it said was in compliance with EU rules that [users](#) must be given a choice on whether

their data can be collected and used for targeted advertisements. Users can still opt for a free, ad-supported service.

A digital rights group in Austria has filed a complaint against the new service with an Austrian regulator, saying that it amounted to paying a fee to ensure privacy.

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