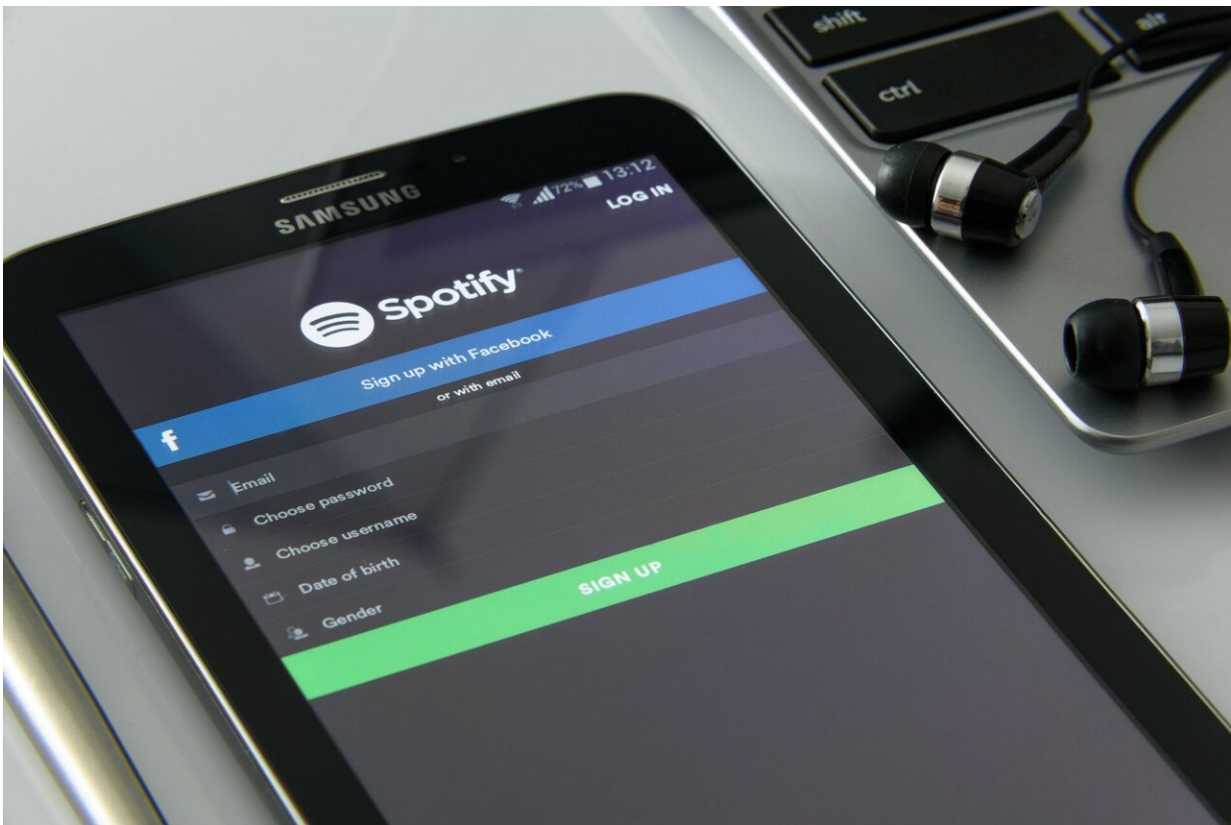


Apple set to face near €500 million EU fine in Spotify row

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Apple Inc. will face a European Union fine close to €500 million (\$539 million) over the regulator's investigation into allegations it silenced music-streaming rivals, including Spotify Technology SA, on its

platforms.

The penalty—Apple's first ever from the bloc—will be set after the EU watchdog found that it fell foul of competition rules in thwarting rival music services from informing users that cheaper alternatives existed outside of its App Store, according to people familiar with the matter.

Apple, when contacted for comment, referred to a previous statement, which said that the "App Store has helped Spotify become the top music streaming service across Europe." The European Commission declined to comment. The Financial Times reported the fine earlier.

EU competition chief Margrethe Vestager has made it a core strategy to attempt to dismantle Big Tech's dominance in the bloc through fines and regulatory actions. She's slapped Alphabet Inc.'s Google with penalties of more than €8 billion and also ordered Apple to repay €13 billion in allegedly unfair tax breaks from Ireland.

Apple has also faced pressure from individual EU member states. It was fined €1.1 billion in France in 2020 for anti-competitive behavior, although the total was later reduced to €372 million after an appeal.

The EU's investigation into Apple's App Store was sparked by a complaint nearly four years ago from Spotify, which claimed it was forced to ramp up the price of its monthly subscriptions to cover costs associated with Apple's alleged stranglehold on how the App Store operates.

In a closed-door meeting between EU officials and Apple in June last year, the tech firm told regulators it had already addressed any possible competition concerns arising from Spotify's complaint.

In a separate probe, Apple is set to have its settlement proposal in the

EU's investigation into its tap-and-pay tech accepted, according to people familiar with the matter.

The commission is poised to accept a 10-year offer from Apple to open up access to its coveted near-field communication chip on iPhones to rival digital wallets, after a market test received largely [positive feedback](#), the people, who asked not to be identified because the matter is private, said.

Apple's move to settle the case came after the EU watchdog earlier raised formal concerns that the company had restricted access to the technology, amounting to an alleged abuse of its market power.

Vestager is now readying for enforcement of the bloc's flagship Digital Markets Act—set to come into play on March 7. The sweeping new rules are intended to head off competition violations by tech firms before they take root.

Under the DMA, it will be illegal for the most powerful firms to favor their own services over those of rivals. They'll be barred from combining [personal data](#) across their different services, prohibited from using data they collect from third-party merchants to compete against them, and will have to allow users to download apps from rivals platforms.

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