

String of litigation cases bites Apple

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The US government Thursday [sued Apple](#) claiming the tech behemoth illegally maintained a monopoly for its iPhone by stifling competition and imposing high costs on consumers—the latest in a string of legal headaches facing the firm.

Here are the key allegations concerning its main recent legal battles:

Stand-off with Epic Games

Video game publisher Epic Games has been scouring the courts and approaching the authorities for some years to force Apple and Google to open up their mobile operating systems, iOS and Android—which are between them installed on the vast majority of smartphones—to stores to allow the downloading of alternative applications alternatives.

The intention: To end commission on user purchases.

Two years ago, a US [federal judge](#) asked Apple to permit publishers to offer users alternative payment methods, while declaring that Epic had failed to prove a violation of competition law.

But Epic, backed by other internet giants such as Microsoft and Meta, accuses Apple of not respecting this decision, according to the text of a collective initiative document transmitted on March 20 to a California court.

Apple has proposed a solution allowing it to receive between 12 and 27 percent of the take on purchases outside its store—this representing only a small reduction compared to what it charges on its App Store.

Epic Games also took Apple (and Google) to court in Australia over similar grievances. The trial opened Monday and is expected to last for five months.

In the EU's sights

After music streaming platform Spotify took a case to the European

Commission, the latter imposed a fine on Apple of 1.8 billion euros (\$1.9 billion) on March 4 for preventing European users from accessing information on alternative, cheaper music streaming services.

In Brussels' view, Apple applied restrictions to prevent [application developers](#) from promoting "alternative and cheaper offers outside the Apple ecosystem" to iPhone and iPad users in order to favor its own service Apple Music.

Apple has decided to appeal the judgment.

The situation has become more complex for the company since March 7 when Europe's "Digital Markets Act" (DMA) regulation came into effect.

This historic arsenal of legislative power forces the world's six largest companies, including Apple, to open up their platforms to competition.

Apple has announced that its European users will soon be able to download applications directly from websites.

French lighten load on appeal

In 2020, the French Competition Authority ordered Apple to pay a record fine of 1.1 billion euros for anti-competitive behavior towards France-based retailers.

The Paris Court of Appeal, however, reduced the sanction by two thirds in 2022, to 372 million euros after Apple said it had the right to appeal the original punishment.

Spain, Italy distribution

The Spanish competition authority imposed a global fine of 194 million euros on Apple and Amazon in 2023 for anti-competitive cooperative practices over distribution of Apple brand products by Amazon Spain.

The Italian equivalent body had for its part in 2021 fined Amazon and Apple 200 million euros for restricting access to Amazon's platform for some resellers of Apple products.

British developers join in

Apple faces a further lawsuit relating to [app store](#) fees in Britain to the tune of 785 million pounds (\$995 million). It is alleged that the firm charged third-party developers hefty unfair commissions of up to 30 percent on purchases of apps in its app store.

Russian fines too

In January of this year Apple had to pay a \$13.6-million fine in Russia for violating competition laws regarding in-app payments.

Apple had only last year had to pay a fine of some \$11.1 million for allegedly abusing its dominant mobile apps market position.

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