German minister eyes possibility of breaking up Google

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German Justice Minister Heiko Maas at the Chancellery in Berlin on March 26, 2014

Germany's justice minister says the possibility of dismantling Google should be considered if the Internet giant abuses its dominant position, in a newspaper interview to be published Saturday.

"Just imagine an energy company that covers 95 percent of the whole

market. The cartel authority would act quite quickly," Heiko Maas told Saturday's Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung.

"Such conditions are, in market terms, not sensible, not healthy," he said according to a pre-released copy of the interview.

"So yes, if Google misuses its dominant position to systematically push aside competitors, then as a last means something like a dissolution should be considered," he said.

Maas said the digital era had long left behind national borders and rules and there was now a need for an "international network law".

Defiance is strong in Germany over the US Internet search engine's dominant position.

German-based media giant Axel Springer is among a group of players in Europe's digital markets which has lodged a complaint with the European Commission against what it alleges are new anti-competitive abuses by Google.

Maas admitted however that he used Google daily. "I am unfortunately part of the problem," he said.

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