

EU antitrust chief slams senators on Oracle deal

December 8 2009

(AP) -- The European Union's antitrust chief said Tuesday that U.S. senators who pressed her to approve Oracle Corp.'s takeover of Sun Microsystems Inc. should stop interfering in Europe's affairs and prioritize U.S. health care reform.

Neelie Kroes, EU competition commissioner, is holding up the \$7.4 billion deal over worries that it would give Oracle too much control over the [database software](#) market.

A group of 59 U.S. senators wrote to her last month, asking her to speed up approval for a deal that, if it fails, could cost thousands of American jobs.

Kroes slammed the senators for "interfering in someone else's decisions rather than taking the most important decision that you have control over: improving health care."

"Is this really more important than fixing your own health care system?" she asked in a speech, adding that the senators needed to get their priorities straight.

EU officials have also criticized as inappropriate a recent statement from the U.S. Department of Justice asking for a speedy resolution to the European case.

European regulators have a Jan. 27 deadline to decide whether to

approve the takeover or block it. They say they are concerned that Oracle will gain control of [open source database](#) company MySQL, which they claim will increasingly pose a threat to Oracle's own proprietary database software.

The EU commission says it is concerned that Oracle could refuse to license MySQL to some companies or for some uses in order to favor its own software - which could limit customer choice and ultimately hike prices. Sun paid \$1 billion for MySQL last year.

The EU objection ratchets up tension about the fate of the deal, which Sun badly needs to go through. It lost \$677 million over the last four quarters and is rapidly shedding market share to rivals like IBM Corp. and Hewlett-Packard Co.

Sun also said in October that it would be cutting up to 3,000 jobs, or 10 percent of its worldwide work force, as it awaits a decision on the fate of the deal.

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Citation: EU antitrust chief slams senators on Oracle deal (2009, December 8) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2009-12-eu-antitrust-chief-slams-senators.html>

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