

Google chief to meet French president amid pay row

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Executive Chairman of Google, Eric E. Schmidt, pictured in 2011, will meet with French President Francois Hollande as the Internet giant wrangles with Paris over a bill that would force search engines to pay for content, a government source said.

Google's executive chairman Eric Schmidt will meet with French President Francois Hollande on Monday as the Internet giant wrangles with Paris over a bill that would force search engines to pay for content,

a government source said.

Schmidt's meeting with the president will be preceded by one with Communication and Culture Minister Aurelie Filippetti, the source said on condition of anonymity.

Google has warned that it would exclude French media sites from its search results if France adopts a bill that will force search engines to pay for content.

A letter sent by Google to several French ministerial offices this month said it "cannot accept" such a move and the company "as a consequence would be required to no longer reference French sites," according to a copy obtained by AFP.

Google said a law which would require it to make payments to media sites for displaying links to their content, would "threaten (Google's) very existence".

Leading French newspaper publishers last month called on the government to adopt a law imposing a settlement in the long-running dispute with Google, forcing it and other search engines to share some of the [advertising revenue](#) from user searches for news contained on media websites.

Their demand follows the German government approving in August draft legislation that would force search engines to pay commissions to German media websites.

The culture minister Filippetti told a parliamentary commission last week that she was in favour of the idea, calling it "a tool that it seems important to me to develop".

She said she was surprised by the tone of [Google's](#) letter, telling AFP that "you don't deal with a democratically-elected [government](#) with threats."

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