

Microsoft did not meet browser commitments 2011-12: EU

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Microsoft did not meet commitments to provide clients a web browser choice in 2011-12, the European Commission said Wednesday as it pursued a probe that could lead to more fines for the US software giant.

[Microsoft](#) had made a legally binding commitment to provide such a choice and it was a serious matter to breach them, European Competition Commissioner Joaquin Almunia said.

If companies "enter into commitments they must do what they committed to do otherwise they must face the consequences," Almunia told a press conference.

A statement said the commission had told the company "of its preliminary view that Microsoft has failed to comply with its commitments to offer users a choice screen enabling them to easily choose their preferred [web browser](#)" between February 2011 and July 2012.

The commitments had been legally binding on Microsoft in 2009 to address competition concerns failing redress, the commission was now sending a 'statement of objections' on its position as the investigation proceeds.

It said from February 2011 to July 2012, "millions of Windows users in the EU may not have seen the choice screen. Microsoft has acknowledged that the choice screen was not displayed during that

period," the statement said.

In response to the EU request in 2009, Microsoft had said it would make available for five years in the European Economic Area a "choice screen."

This would have enabled Windows users "to choose in an informed and unbiased manner which web browser(s) they wanted to install in addition to, or instead of, Microsoft's web browser," the statement added.

A statement of objections is a formal step in Commission investigations, allowing the concerned party to reply, with a final decision only coming after they have made their defence.

Under EU law, a company found to have breached commitments given to resolve such cases can face a fine of up to 10 percent of its annual sales.

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