

France probes Apple's business practices

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Customers wait to buy Apple's new iPhone 5s smartphone in front of the Apple Store in Paris on September 20, 2013.

France's finance ministry is probing sale conditions set on iPhone distributors by Apple, a source close to the case said Wednesday.

The US tech giant has been under the scrutiny of French authorities for several months after eBizcuss, the first exclusive reseller of Apple goods in France, filed a complaint for unfair trade practices.

The source, who wished to remain anonymous, said the probe had been launched by the ministry's competition and [fraud prevention](#) department.

According to the website of BFMTV television, which first revealed the investigation, the ministry is looking into "most of the clauses dictated by Apple: obligation to favour the iPhone over other devices, promises to buy specific quantities etc."

Finance Minister Pierre Moscovici, Industrial Renewal Minister Arnaud Montebourg and Fleur Pellerin, innovation minister, are reportedly behind the probe.

News of the investigation comes several months after French competition authorities raided Apple stores following the eBizcuss complaint.

Apple has been accused of favouring its own stores with the supply of new devices and eBizcuss accused the US firm of limiting phone supplies.

The company was the biggest reseller of Apple goods in France with 15 stores but was formally liquidated in May 2012.

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