

Samsung: No European patent suits for five years (Update)

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(AP)—Samsung Electronics Co. has offered not to launch any patent lawsuits over key mobile telephone technology in Europe for the coming five years, in hopes of avoiding a fine from the European Commission.

The Commission reported Thursday the South Korean company's settlement offer and called for interested parties—such as rivals Apple Inc. and Microsoft Corp.—to respond.

The Commission's top regulator Joaquin Almunia believes Samsung tried to use its patent portfolio as a tool to stifle competition, seeking injunctions to keep Apple products that violated Samsung patents off the market.

Almunia said Thursday enforcing patents is a legitimate business practice. But once a technology becomes an industry standard, its owner must offer others a chance to license it on reasonable terms—something Samsung failed to do.

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