

# Russia fines Google \$6.7 million over anti-trust charge

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Russia's largest search engine Yandex asked anti-trust authorities to prevent Android phones from being automatically bundled with Google's search engine

Russia's anti-trust authority on Thursday fined Google 438 million rubles (\$6.75 million) after finding it guilty of abusing its dominant market position by forcing smartphone makers to install its search engine on Androids.

The Federal Antimonopoly Service (FAS) in September last year deemed Google in breach of a law on "protecting competition" after an investigation following a complaint by Russia's largest search engine, Yandex.

Yandex asked the anti-trust authorities to prevent Android phones from being automatically bundled with Google's search engine.

The FAS said that Google has two months to pay the fine.

Yelena Zayeva, the head of its department for regulating communications and IT was quoted in the statement as saying the ruling "will allow the development of competition on the mobile software market in Russia, which will have a positive effect for consumers."

All companies whose production is on sale in Russia have to observe the law on competition, "including transnational corporations," Zayeva added.

Google said in a statement sent to AFP: "We have received notice of the fine from FAS and will analyze closely before deciding our next steps."

"In the meantime, we continue to talk to all invested parties to help consumers, device manufacturers and developers thrive on Android in Russia," Google said.

The tech giant's Android operating system dominates the smartphone market with a share of around 80 percent, which enables Google to offer search and other services to handset users.

Russia's anti-trust authority had been holding consultations with Google aimed at reaching an amicable agreement, but this required Google to admit guilt.

Google has insisted that consumers are free to choose whether to use its services.

Google has been hit by similar anti-trust charges in other countries, particularly in the European Union, which has launched three cases against Google, one of which is specifically about using the dominance of the Android mobile phone operating system to restrict competition.

Russia's anti-trust authority this week also launched legal proceedings against US tech giant Apple over the alleged fixing of resellers' prices for iPhones in the country.

Apple said in a statement sent to AFP: "Resellers set their own prices for the Apple products they sell in Russia and around the world."

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