

EU disagreements on Big Tech regulations could dilute regulatory efforts while tech giants become more powerful

Article

The news: The EU, which has spearheaded landmark regulatory efforts to rein in Big Tech, is running into issues getting members to agree on how far to take their antitrust efforts, per The Financial Times.

Why it's worth watching: Right and left factions of the EU are struggling to agree on the scope of antitrust measures needed to regulate Big Tech companies. The disputes could reportedly delay implementation for years.

“It sounded like we had agreed but that is not the case ... at all. We are a long way from having a common position on this,” said Evelyne Gebhardt, a German MEP.

- Last year, Big Tech critics lauded the EU for its Digital Services and Digital Markets acts, “a [radical blueprint](#) for tech regulation that would put onerous responsibilities on the likes of **Google, Facebook, and Amazon** to clean up their platforms and ensure fair competition,” per the Financial Times.
- But the measures have since been bogged down in the European Parliament and now risk being diluted and delayed. There are fears that the rules will not be in place before the EU’s antitrust policy chief, Margrethe Vestager, leaves her post in three years.
- France and Germany have also been [pushing](#) their own Big Tech legislative agendas, which could further undermine the EU’s objective of a single set of rules.

The problem: Various countries and regions are looking to the EU to lead in regulating Big Tech, but cracks in the system are beginning to show.

It was revealed in September that Ireland is the “[bottleneck](#)” slowing down the EU’s General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) enforcement, exposing the weakness of tasking a handful of countries to enforce GDPR rules.

What’s next? The US and the EU planned to take a more unified approach in their Big Tech regulation efforts and held a meeting last month, [per](#) Reuters. If successful, collaboration between various regulatory bodies could make it harder for US tech companies to fight new rules.

- EU legislators failing to agree on Big Tech regulation could prolong delays while companies like Facebook, Apple, Amazon, and Google continue to grow and [amass more power](#) and control—possibly making it even harder to enact effective regulations.

Total Value of GDPR Fines Imposed in Europe, by Country, May 25, 2018-Jan 17, 2020

thousands of €

France	€51,100.0	Hungary	€198.0
Germany	€24,574.5	Latvia	€168.9
Austria	€18,107.7	Cyprus	€151.9
Italy	€11,550.0	Slovakia	€132.6
Bulgaria	€3,156.5	Lithuania	€67.5
Spain	€1,381.1	Sweden	€53.6
Poland	€947.3	Belgium	€39.0
Greece	€550.0	Malta	€35.5
Netherlands	€460.0	Estonia	€0.0
Portugal	€424.0	Finland	€0.0
Norway	€406.2	Iceland	€0.0
Denmark	€360.0	Ireland	€0.0
Romania	€329.5	Lichtenstein	€0.0
UK*	€320.0	Luxembourg	€0.0
Czech Republic	€291.7	Slovenia	€0.0

*Note: *excludes two public notices of intent to fine totaling €329 million (£282 million) as they were not finalized during time of publication*

Source: DLA Piper, "DLA Piper GDPR data breach survey: January 2020," Jan 20, 2020

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