

FairSearch is a group of multinational businesses and organisations who lobby against the dominance of Google and certain Google business practices.

Established in October 2010, FairSearch was formed by travel sites, swiftly followed by Microsoft in December that same year. According to Nicolas Petit, a professor of competition law at the University of Liège, FairSearch is "seen by many observers as a Microsoft trojan horse"¹. Now FairSearch Europe is a group of 12 European and US-parented companies active across the various search sectors, including travel, mobile phone manufacturers, software companies, search providers and online commerce: Nokia, France's Twenga, Poland's Allegro, UK price comparison site Foundem, Brazil's BusCapé and US companies Expedia, TripAdvisor, Oracle, Microsoft, admarketplace.com, the Find and the Travel Tech Association.

FairSearch focuses at lobbying and complaining against Google (on their website no other activities appear), under the pretext of promoting *"economic growth, innovation and choice across the Internet ecosystem by fostering and defending competition in online and mobile search. We believe in enforcement of existing laws to prevent anticompetitive behaviour that harms consumers."*

In this context they had frequent meetings with Cabinets and Commission services.

FairSearch believes in two essential principles:

TRANSPARENCY: Consumers – not search engines – should choose winners in the marketplace. Consumers benefit from more choices in the search marketplace competing to win users, innovating to improve products and displaying results transparently. When search providers engage in search discrimination – manipulating search results to promote a favoured product and demote competitors – consumers pay the price.

INNOVATION: Consumers benefit when competition in the marketplace forces companies to continue to innovate and develop the best solutions for online search. No one company should be allowed to use its dominance to foreclose competitors from the search marketplace – particularly in high-traffic specialty segments, like travel, jobs, health, real estate, media and local search.

It finds both those principles violated by Google.

FairSearch is looking forward to cooperating with the Commission on the DSM.

As to the regulation of platforms and the data platforms collect, they are reluctant and find the issue very complex, risking to impede their capacity to keep up with the rapid pace of digital change and possibly undermining their global competitiveness.

"Existing competition law, properly enforced, provides companies room to innovate in a competitive environment, and that any additional regulation would need to be developed very carefully to ensure that it does not constrain the digital sector's ability to evolve to meet the fresh challenges of the next digital revolution."

¹ <http://www.computerworld.com/article/2496436/technology-law-regulation/microsoft-not-fooling-anyone-by-using-fairsearch-front-in-antitrust-compla.html>