

# "GOOGLE MAPS PLATFORM": POSSIBLE RESTRICTIONS OF COMPETITION FOR MAP SERVICES

Press release of the German Federal Cartel office (BKartA) of June 21, 2022

## WHAT HAPPENED?

Proceedings initiated by the BKartA on June 21, 2022 against

- [Google Germany GmbH](#), Hamburg and
- its parent company [Alphabet Inc.](#), Mountain View, USA

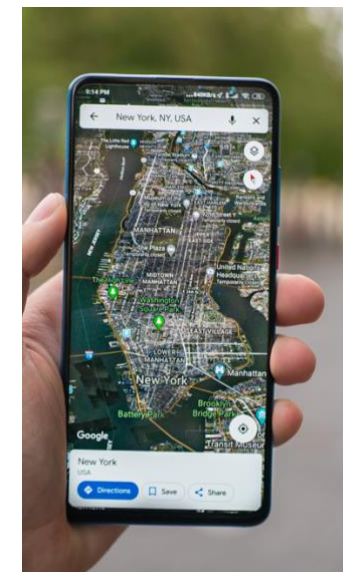
in light of potential violations of competition law, in particular abusive conduct by an undertaking of paramount significance for competition across markets under [Section 19a GWB](#).

Excerpt of the [press release of the BKartA of June 21, 2022](#): „... *Google Maps Platform offers access to several map services. Applications of these services include embedding the maps into third-party websites, for example to show the locations of shops or hotels. The preliminary assessment is that Google restricts in particular the possibility to combine Google's map services with third-party maps. This practice could impair competition in the area of map services. The fact that Google makes the use of its services in vehicle infotainment systems subject to very strict terms of use applicable to its "Google Automotive Services" could restrict competition even further.*”

## FOR WHOM IS IT RELEVANT?

### 1. Google or Alphabet

If there is a violation by Google of Section 19a GWB, the BKartA can prohibit the conduct. This is already the third proceeding against Google that the BKartA initiated on the basis of Section 19a GWB (see "More Information" below).



## Section 19a GWB

Abusive Conduct of Undertakings of Paramount Significance for Competition Across Markets

(1) The Bundeskartellamt may issue a decision declaring that an undertaking which is active to a significant extent on markets within the meaning of [Section 18\(3a\)](#) is of paramount significance for competition across markets. (...)

(2) In the case of a declaratory decision issued pursuant to subsection (1), the Bundeskartellamt may prohibit such undertaking from,

1. favouring its own offers over the offers of its competitors when mediating access to supply and sales markets ...
2. taking measures that impede other undertakings in carrying out their business activities on supply or sales markets where the undertaking's activities are of relevance for accessing such markets ...
3. directly or indirectly impeding competitors on a market on which the undertaking can rapidly expand its position even without being dominant ...
4. creating or appreciably raising barriers to market entry or otherwise impeding other undertakings by processing data relevant for competition that have been collected by the undertaking, or demanding terms and conditions that permit such processing ...
5. refusing the interoperability of products or services or data portability, or making it more difficult, and in this way impeding competition;
6. providing other undertakings with insufficient information about the scope, quality or success of the service rendered or commissioned, or otherwise making it more difficult for such undertakings to assess the value of this service;
7. demanding benefits for handling the offers of another undertaking which are disproportionate to the reasons for the demand ...

## 2. Google's competitors who are offering map services

Because of Google's alleged conduct, Google's competitors are restricted from offering their map services in competition with Google's map service.

## 3. Customers who require map services

They may receive a worse deal than if Google did not restrict the possible combination of map services.

## IS THERE A NEED FOR ACTION?

The BKartA will now investigate to determine whether Google has actually violated German competition law. Customers and competitors of Google will be contacted by the BKartA in the coming weeks. In this context, they will have the opportunity to inform the BKartA about any business conduct by Google that they consider to be critical under competition law.

## MORE INFORMATION

Further proceedings against Google from the recent past:

- Investigation into [\(link\)](#) and determination [\(link\)](#) of Google's paramount significance for competition across markets within the meaning of Section 19 (1) GWB
- Opening of proceedings against Google regarding the conditions of Google's data processing [\(Link\)](#)
- Opening of proceedings with regard to the offer "Google News Showcase" [\(Link\)](#) and examination of Google's proposals to remove competition concerns [\(Link\)](#)