



European
Federation of
Journalists



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European press publishers and journalists: Google's unilateral suppression of press content from its services is a warning sign to European democracies and endangers the sustainability of information "Made in Europe".

European press publishers and journalists are deeply concerned about Google's ongoing test which stated goal is to remove press content from its services across several European countries for an undetermined period for an estimated 2,6 million European citizens.

This experiment, allegedly aimed at measuring the press's contribution to Google's brand attractiveness, poses a serious threat to the financial sustainability of a European free press, European journalism and the health of European democracies.

As a digital gatekeeper under the EU Digital Markets Act (DMA), Google wields significant influence through its near monopoly on online search, serving as the primary access point to press content for many European citizens. Any action that reduces the press's reach to readers undermines publishers' ability to fund their editorial teams. Moreover, restricting citizens' access to information directly affects the quality of democratic debate across Europe.

Based on our extensive experience negotiating with Google, we believe this "test" is conducted in bad faith. Google has been neither transparent nor forthcoming, refusing to share details about the test or guarantee access to its results. By defining its own research parameters and assessing its own performance, Google risks manipulating the outcome to devalue the press's economic role and its real contribution to Google's success.

In the context of the ongoing negotiations across Europe to secure fair remuneration for press content under EU copyright law, this experiment appears to constitute a clear act of intimidation. The Competition Authority in France foresaw such behavior and identified the risk of retaliation by Google. To safeguard a fair negotiation process, it prohibited Google from delisting publisher's content. This intervention enabled French magazine publishers, through their national association, to secure the temporary suspension of the test in France.

Press publishers and journalists across Europe fully support SEPM's initiative. We will closely follow the judicial proceedings in France, with the hope that the outcome will affirm Europe's sovereignty over its information ecosystem.

We also repeat our call on Google to immediately terminate this "test" across all affected countries. At a time of widespread interference with and manipulation of information and public opinion, a dominant company like Google must take full responsibility for its actions and cease obstructing citizens' right to access journalistic information.