

European safety and health experts meet with EU Commissioner to confront challenges for micro and small enterprises

The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) welcomes Commissioner Marianne Thyssen and other stakeholders to a seminar on how to ensure workers' safety and health in micro and small enterprises (MSEs). The seminar takes place on 25 January in Bilbao and coincides with the publication of two new reports that explore the latest findings of EU-OSHA's project on MSEs. The reports, as well as the seminar, focus on good practice examples from throughout the EU, identifying key success factors and challenges, and the important role of intermediaries when it comes to improving occupational safety and health (OSH) in MSEs.

Protection of health and safety at work is one of the key principles of our European Pillar of Social Rights. It is imperative that employer and worker representatives, national authorities and OSH advisors work together to ensure that workers in micro and small enterprises can enjoy safe and healthy working conditions.

Many MSEs find managing OSH challenging, and workers are more likely to be at risk of safety or health issues in these enterprises than in other, larger enterprises. In fact, more than 80% of all occupational injuries in the EU occur in micro, small or medium-sized businesses – and the smaller the business, the higher the risk. The findings of the latest reports shed light on MSE-specific problems and concerns, OSH attitudes and behaviours, and the drivers of and barriers to the implementation of OSH measures in such enterprises. The good practice examples from MSEs, analysed in depth during the course of the project, provide experts with a view of what works, for whom and under what circumstances. Successful approaches to supporting OSH include those involving awareness-raising activities, training, the provision of practical tools, and economic incentives. The instrumental role played by intermediaries in supporting OSH in MSEs is also clear from the reports, and is a key topic of discussion at the seminar.

Marianne Thyssen, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, emphasises that: *'Protection of health and safety at work is one of the key principles of our [European Pillar of Social Rights](#), as well as social dialogue and involvement of workers. As part of this and as the good examples demonstrate, it is imperative that employer representatives and worker representatives as well as national authorities and occupational safety and health advisors work together to support safety and health in micro and small enterprises and to ensure that workers in these enterprises can enjoy safe and healthy working conditions.'*

Good practice examples

The value of cooperation among different stakeholders and the incorporation of OSH into the supply chain is particularly well illustrated by the British Olympic Park project. During the construction of the Olympic Park, all relevant stakeholders – including the national OSH regulator, the contractors and the unions – were consulted before the project began and at all stages throughout. Safety and health was a top priority and – through supply chain management – all subcontracted MSEs were required to adhere to strict OSH standards which led to an outstandingly low rate of accidents during construction. Motivating MSEs to take action and raising awareness of relevant tools and legislation are key to improving OSH. In Denmark, under a nationwide labour inspection initiative, inspectors systematically visit MSEs and provide OSH-related guidance and resources, with the aim of reaching and opening up dialogue with all MSEs.

EU-OSHA Director, Christa Sedlatschek, highlights another example of how the actions of intermediaries at the national level can help MSEs deal with OSH: *'In France, Online interactive Risk Assessment (OiRA) tools have been integrated into the preventive approach to OSH. Using the framework developed by EU-OSHA, [the National Research and Safety Institute has tailored OiRA tools](#) to the needs of two MSE-dominated and vulnerable sectors – the road transport and restaurant sectors – enabling businesses to assess their own risks and implement measures to improve safety and health. What is particularly impressive about this example is how the concerted actions of several regional and national OSH institutes, professional organisations and other relevant sectoral partners have enabled the development and dissemination of these tools to MSEs.'*

Although all of the examples provide evidence that effective tools and well-designed interventions can successfully support OSH in MSEs, many of the initiatives are voluntary and therefore will not reach MSEs that take a reactive approach to OSH and do not actively engage with OSH institutions.

So how can policies and programmes be shaped to meet the needs of the hardest-to-reach MSEs? The project's final analysis report, to be published later in the year, will discuss this in detail, by focusing on the transferability of good practices and exploring the role of policies and programmes in a regulatory and socio-economic context.

Links:

[Joint Statement on the attack against the NGO Save the Children in](#)

Afghanistan

Federica Mogherini, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission, Christos Stylianides, the Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, and Neven Mimica, the Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, issue the following statement:

Saving lives should not cost lives.

Today's terrorist attack against the NGO Save the Children, whose staff work to help vulnerable children in Afghanistan, is a grave violation of international humanitarian law. It is an affront to all humanitarian organisations, to humanity, and in particular, it demonstrates a blatant disregard for the wellbeing and future of all Afghan children, who rely on the dedicated work of others.

Our condolences go to the families of all those who have been killed, and we wish a speedy recovery to those injured. At this time, our thoughts are also with Save the Children, a longstanding partner of the European Union in Afghanistan and around the world, working tirelessly to save and change peoples' lives for the better.

We will not allow acts of terror to deter our support to those most in need in Afghanistan. The European Union stands by the Afghan authorities and people and remains committed to helping the Afghan people to achieve a peaceful future.

Statement by Commissioner Vestager on Commission decision to fine Qualcomm for abuse of market dominance in LTE baseband chipsets

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Today, the Commission has decided to fine Qualcomm 997 million euros for behaviour that is illegal under EU antitrust rules.

Qualcomm has abused its market dominance for a type of chipsets, namely baseband chipsets that comply with the Long-Term Evolution standard – in short “LTE”, or you may know it better as 4G. LTE baseband chipsets are vital components in smartphones and tablets. What they do is enable our phones and

tablets to transmit voice and data when we call our friends, share pictures with them or read online news.

For quite some time, Qualcomm has been the world's largest maker of LTE baseband chipsets. Our decision found that Qualcomm cemented its position by illegally shutting out rivals from the market for over five years. Between 2011 and 2016, Qualcomm paid billions of US Dollars to a key customer, Apple, so that they would not buy from rivals. These payments were not just reductions in price – they were made on the condition that Apple would exclusively use Qualcomm's baseband chipsets in all its iPhones and iPads. This meant that no one could challenge Qualcomm effectively in the market for LTE baseband chipsets.

So, to be clear, this case is about Qualcomm having taken measures to avoid competition on the merits. Its illegal behaviour denied consumers and other companies the benefits of effective competition, namely more choice and innovation – and this in a sector with a huge demand and potential for innovative technologies.

Why Qualcomm's behaviour is illegal

Our investigation showed that Qualcomm has held a dominant position in the market for LTE baseband chipsets. For the majority of the period investigated, more than 90% of these chipsets sold worldwide were produced by Qualcomm. There are significant barriers to enter this market. One reason is that these chipsets are complex products. Companies have to spend large amounts on research and development to be able to make them. They also need to support a variety of technical standards.

Just because Qualcomm has become dominant in this market is not, as such, a problem under EU antitrust rules. We congratulate companies for becoming successful due to their skill and innovation.

However, since competition is already weakened in a market dominated by just one company, such a market needs extra vigilance. That's why EU antitrust rules put special responsibilities on dominant companies. They are not allowed to abuse their strong market position to hinder competition in the market.

This means that dominant companies may not try to stop their rivals from entering a market, by blocking their access to customers. When a lot of money is at stake for the customer, this strategy can be very effective. And it becomes even more effective, if it is targeted at a large and important customer.

The outcome is that rivals are prevented from challenging dominant companies with new, more innovative products.

And this is what Qualcomm did in this case.

During the period we investigated, Intel was one of Qualcomm's main potential rivals in this market. Intel was of course the dominant company for chips used in computers. But as regards chipsets for smartphones and tablets, Intel

was at the time a relatively small player. They were trying to challenge Qualcomm in the market for chipsets used in mobile devices.

And it seems they had the ability to do so: in our investigation we obtained internal documents from Apple, showing that Apple was seriously thinking about switching from Qualcomm to Intel for some of its supplies of baseband chipsets. They did so at various moments between 2011 and 2016.

This would have made a big difference to Intel. Apple is one of the largest makers of smartphones and tablets in the world.

But in the end, Apple decided not to make the change during that time.

Why? Trying out a new chipset supplier would have cost Apple a lot of money. Qualcomm paid billions of US dollars to Apple on the condition that Apple sources exclusively from Qualcomm.

Qualcomm's terms made clear that they would stop these payments, if Apple commercially launched even a single iPhone or iPad model with a chipset not supplied by Qualcomm.

Qualcomm's terms also reduced Apple's incentives to change their mind: if Apple decided to switch suppliers, they wouldn't just forego the future payments to be received from Qualcomm. They would also have had to return some of the payments already received.

So, it wasn't until late in 2016 that Apple started to source some of its input from Intel. In other words, only when the agreements with Qualcomm were about to expire, and switching no longer cost them as much money. And there is evidence that competition in the market is now on the up.

This shows that Qualcomm's payments were decisive to shut out rival chip manufacturers from the market. Qualcomm's behaviour denied rivals the chance to compete effectively, no matter how good their products were. And that denied consumers and other companies the benefits of choice and innovation.

This is why we today fined Qualcomm 997 million euros for having abused its dominant market position. The fine reflects both the seriousness and the duration of the infringement, and is also aimed at deterring market players from engaging in such anti-competitive practices in the future.

Impact of Intel judgment

The internal documents I mentioned are just part of the evidence we relied on to prove our case. Our decision sets out how consumers and competition have suffered as a result of Qualcomm's conduct based on a variety of qualitative and quantitative evidence.

Of course, I say this also because this is the Commission's first decision on an abuse of a dominant market position since the Court of Justice ruling on the Intel case last September. This judgment gave guidance on how the Commission has to prove its case and which tools it can rely on. We have carefully examined the ruling and the evidence in our case file, to make sure

our decision fully complies with the guidance given by the Court.

As always, we will publish our decision for all to see, as soon as we agree with Qualcomm and third parties on any confidential business secrets that need to be removed.

Conclusion

What our decision today confirms is that dominant companies operating on European markets must compete on the merits. Qualcomm chose to instead shut out competitors from the market. That is illegal under EU antitrust rules. And that's why we have taken today's decision. So that European consumers can enjoy the full benefits of competition and innovation.

Space policy: Galileo Security Monitoring Centre back-up site moves to Spain

The Galileo Security Monitoring Centre (GSMC) is a technical infrastructure which plays a key role in ensuring the security of the EU's satellite navigation programme Galileo, including its Public Regulated Service (PRS). The GSMC has its main and operational location in France and its back-up site in the United Kingdom (Swanwick). As a consequence of the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the EU, the GSMC's back-up site needs to be relocated from the United Kingdom to one of the 27 EU Member States.

Commissioner for the Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs Elżbieta **Bieńkowska** said: *"Europe's satellite navigation system Galileo has already been delivering high quality services for over a year now. With today's decision the Commission is taking the necessary operational steps to ensure business continuity and preserve the security of the Galileo system."*

On 1 August 2017, the Commission launched an open and transparent call for expressions of interest to host the back-up site of the GSMC. Six Member States (Belgium, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Spain) submitted proposals which the Commission assessed according to objective technical, security, financial and programmatic criteria on the basis of the rules foreseen in the Galileo Regulation. On 18 January 2018, representatives of 27 Member States in the European Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS) Programmes Committee voted in favour of the Commission proposal to relocate the back-up site to Spain. With today's formal decision, the Commission is launching the process for the transfer of the back-up site from the UK to Spain.

Next steps

The new site will become operational in the coming months, subject to its prior accreditation by the [Security Accreditation Board](#) for European GNSS Systems. The hosting Member State will bear the costs for hosting the back-up site, while the EU will bear the costs of staffing and Galileo equipment. The GNSS Agency in Prague (GSA) will decide on the number of staff to operate the back-up centre.

Background

Galileo is a key component of the Commission's [Space Strategy](#), which focuses on fostering new services, creating business opportunities, promoting Europe's leadership in space and maintaining Europe's strategic autonomy. The high-precision global satellite navigation system already supports emergency operations, provides more accurate navigation services, offers better time synchronisation for critical infrastructures and ensures secure services for public authorities.

The Galileo Public Regulated Service (PRS) is an encrypted navigation service for government-authorised users, such as civil protection services, customs officers and the police. This system is particularly robust and fully encrypted to provide service continuity for government users during emergencies or crisis situations.

A growing number of companies and innovative start-ups are using Galileo data and enabling their devices, including the newest versions of smartphones (find out if your device is [Galileo-enabled](#)).

Once the constellation is completed, it will improve in-car navigation and mobile phone signals, help road and rail transport become safer and act as a catalyst for R&D and high-tech job creation around Europe.

[Commission to host first ever Education Summit: laying the foundations for a European Education Area](#)

This Summit follows the [Gothenburg Summit](#) in November 2017 where the Commission set out its vision to create a European Education Area by 2025, and the [December European Council](#) where Member States expressed a willingness to do more in the area of education. It is an important opportunity for 18 EU Education Ministers, education professionals and representatives from all over Europe to come together and discuss the future of education in Europe. This European Education Summit is the start of a series, with the second one to follow in autumn 2019.

Ahead of the event, Tibor **Navracsics** said, *“Education should equip citizens, young and old, with the competences to lead fulfilling lives and build communities. While education is the responsibility of Member States, we need to step up our cooperation at EU level. We have to use the full potential of education to build resilient societies, create a sense of belonging and enable people to experience European identity in all its diversity. To help achieve this, we want to boost language learning, ensure that your diploma is recognised wherever you are in the Union, that European universities can maximise their cooperation, and that studying in another EU country becomes easier than ever before. This is what a true European Education Area is about, and tomorrow’s Summit is a concrete step towards making it a reality.”*

Under the broad theme **‘Laying the foundations of a European Education Area: for an innovative, inclusive and values-based education’**, the Summit will focus on answering questions such as how quality, inclusive and values-based education can contribute to a successful Europe; what competences are needed for the decades to come; and how we can boost basic, digital and entrepreneurial skills.

The [programme](#) includes over twenty sessions, master classes and high-level panel discussions, with more than 40 speakers. They cover a vast range of issues, including how to engage disadvantaged pupils to ensure no one is left behind, how to best equip teachers, how to boost learning through sport, as well as the importance of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) in education and the role children play in helping to transform societies.

Next steps

Building on the conclusions of the Summit, the Commission will present further initiatives in spring 2018. These will include proposals on the mutual recognition of diplomas, language learning, a quality framework for early childhood education and care, a European Agenda for Culture, and a new EU Youth Strategy. [In Gothenburg](#), President **Juncker** also invited the EU leaders to work towards doubling the number of young people in the EU participating in Erasmus+ by 2025, which will require a budget of €29.4 billion for the period 2021-2027. Furthermore, the Commission will take forward work on a network of European universities and a new EU student card. The latter will make studying in another EU country easier than ever before.

Background

When EU leaders’ met in Gothenburg in November 2017, the Commission presented a [Communication on Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture](#). In this [Communication](#), the Commission set out its vision for the creation of a European Education Area by 2025 to harness the full potential of education as a driver for job creation, economic growth, social fairness as well as a means to experience European identity in all its diversity.

Only two months after the Gothenburg Summit, on 17 January, the Commission followed up with proposals for new initiatives intended to reduce socio-economic inequalities, whilst sustaining competitiveness in order to build a

more united, stronger and more democratic Europe. They are:

- A [Council Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning](#) and [Annex](#) to improve the development of key competences of people of all ages throughout their lives and to provide guidance to Member States on how to achieve this objective. A particular focus is placed on promoting entrepreneurial drive and innovation-oriented mind-sets in order to unlock personal potential, creativity and self-initiative.
- A [Digital Education Action Plan](#) outlining how the EU can help people, educational institutions and education systems better adapt to life and work in an age of rapid digital change.
- A [Council Recommendation on common values](#), inclusive education and the European dimension of teaching in order to help young people understand the importance of and adhere to common values set out in Article 2 of the Treaty of the European Union. It aims at strengthening social cohesion and contributing to fighting the rise of populism, xenophobia, divisive nationalism and the spreading of fake news.

For More Information

[European Education Summit website](#)

The Summit plenary sessions will be [web streamed](#)

[New measures to boost key competences and digital skills, as well as the European dimension of education](#)

[Factsheet on the European Education Area](#)

[Factsheet on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning](#)

[Factsheet on the Digital Education Action Plan](#)

[Factsheet on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching](#)

[Communication on Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture](#)

[Education & Training Monitor 2017](#)