

EU Investigates Qualcomm Over Antitrust Claims

Written by Alice Marshall
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A Qualcomm Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) filing reveals the chipmaker is yet again under investigation by the EU for possible anti-competitive tactics in the radio frequency chip market.



First revealed by Reuters, the filing shows the EU is investigating whether Qualcomm abused its market muscle in 5G baseband processors to force companies to adopt its radio frequency front end chips instead of 3rd party solutions from the likes of Broadcom or Skyworks. The investigation started on 3 December 2019, and is the latest in a string of regulatory issues leading to billions of dollars in fines for Qualcomm. Last year the company lost a case with the US Federal Trade in Commission (FTC), one currently locked in appeal.

If found guilty of violating antitrust legislation, Qualcomm could face fines worth of up to 10% of annual revenues. The company was already fined €242 million by the European Commission (EC) last year for blocking a rival from the market around 10 years ago. This is its the second

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EU antitrust penalty, since in 2018 it was fined €997m for paying Apple to only use Qualcomm chips, a tactic aimed squarely at rivals such as Intel.

Will Qualcomm feel the pinch from such fines? Probably... Not. As a true giant in the field, Qualcomm sees profits worth \$925m for the last quarter alone, and with smartphone chip contracts with the likes of Samsung, Google and LG its future is all but secured, even with anti-competitive measures in place.

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