

France to take legal action against Google, Apple for 'abusive' practices

PARIS, France - France will take legal action against Google and Apple for "abusive business practices", Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire said on Wednesday as transatlantic ties threaten to be riven by a trade war.



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"I believe in an economy based on justice and I will take Google and Apple before the Paris Commercial Court for abusive business practices" against French start-ups, Le Maire said on RTL radio.

He said start-ups face conditions imposed on them when selling their apps on Google and Apple which "also gather data" and "both can unilaterally modify contracts."

The minister said the situation is unacceptable.

"I consider that Google and Apple, as powerful as they are, shouldn't treat our start-ups and our developers in the way they do today," said Le Maire.

The action against the firms comes as US President Donald Trump has moved towards imposing a 25% tariff on imported

steel and 10% tariff on imports of aluminium.

It is unclear if European nations will obtain waivers, with Trump having singled out the EU as treating the United States badly in trade ties and threatening to tax cars as well.

Le Maire has previously threatened to tax the two firms based on their sales in France, denouncing the legal strategies they use to pay taxes at lower rates in other EU countries.

He added the current action could result in penalties reaching several million euros.

"My responsibility is to ensure economic law and order," said Le Maire. "There are rules. There is justice. It should be respected."

Tech start-ups are a favourite of French President Emmanuel Macron, who has sought to overhaul the nation's laws and regulations to allow entrepreneurs to flourish.

Source: AFP

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