



Citizens' summary

Web browser choice for European consumers

Your internet – Your choice

What's the issue?

- For many years, Microsoft has automatically **tied its 'Internet Explorer' web browser** to its 'Windows' computer operating system.
- The Commission was concerned that – given Microsoft's dominance of the PC operating system market – this **deprives consumers of choice** and results in **fewer innovative products** on the market.
- In October 2009, Microsoft offered **commitments to remove this barrier to competition**. The Commission has now made these commitments legally binding on Microsoft for a period of 5 years.
- From **March 2010**, Windows users will be able to **choose which web browser(s)** they want to use on their computer by means of a browser Choice Screen.

Who will benefit?

- More than **100 million European users of Windows** operating systems (XP, Vista, 7, and successors) and many millions more in the future.
- People using these products for **work or study** (though the choice may be made by system administrators – your IT department).

How will it work?

- You will be offered a 'browser Choice Screen' where you can freely **choose one (or more) of the 12 most popular web browsers**, including Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome, Apple Safari and Opera.
- Each browser will be accompanied by **information from the producer**, to help you – the customer – make a free and informed choice.
- If you have Microsoft's web browser set as your default browser and have chosen to '*automatically accept Windows updates*', you will be automatically directed to the 'Choice Screen'.

If updates are not automatically installed, you will be offered an option to confirm you want to receive the Choice Screen update.

What exactly will change?

- With **greater competition between web browsers**, users are expected to opt for a variety of different browsers.
- This should lead to **more innovation in related products** (digital content, software, web technology etc.).

When is the proposal likely to come into effect?

The browser Choice Screen software update will start in **March 2010**.

The Choice Screen update will be **available for 5 years**.

More information

Frequently asked questions and case documents

http://ec.europa.eu/competition/consumers/web_browsers_choice_en.html

More about competition policy

http://ec.europa.eu/competition/consumers/index_en.html