

French newspapers take legal action against Elon Musk's X over content use

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Le Monde, Le Figaro and others accuse X of not paying for content distribution and seek legal redress. Several news organisations accuse X, the social media platform formerly known as Twitter, of using their content without payment [File: Mauro Pimentel/AFP

Paris, November 13 (RHC)-- Several major French newspapers have decided to take legal action against social media giant X, accusing the platform of using their content without paying.

The joint action on Tuesday includes Le Monde, Le Figaro, Les Echos, Le Parisien, Telerama, Courier International, Huffington Post, Malesherbes Publications and Le Nouvel Obs.

The media outlets said they were due payment under their ancillary rights, which under a European directive adopted into French law are due when social media platforms republish news content. They said X, formerly known as Twitter, has never agreed to open negotiations with French news publishers unlike Alphabet Inc's Google and Meta Platforms Inc.

They also said X, which is owned by billionaire Elon Musk, has not complied with an order issued by the Paris Court of Justice in May to release information required to calculate the amount owed.

“The revenue from these rights, with the investment that it would enable its beneficiaries to make, is a boost to the plurality, independence and quality of the media, which are essential for freedom of expression and the right to information in our democratic society,” the newspapers said in a statement.

A spokesperson for the Paris tribunal confirmed the case and said a hearing was scheduled for May 15. In a similar case, the AFP news agency said in August that it was taking legal action against X before the Judicial Court of Paris.

AFP expressed concern “over the clear refusal from Twitter (recently rebranded as ‘X’) to enter into discussions regarding the implementation of neighbouring rights for the press”, a statement published by the French news agency said.

These rights were established to enable news agencies and publishers to be remunerated by digital platforms that retain most of the monetary value generated by the distribution of news content, it added.

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