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Rashid Baxter



Singapore does not need a bespoke competition regime to police the online economy akin to the EU's Digital Markets Act, according to the head of the country's antitrust watchdog.

Alvin Koh, head of Singapore's Competition and Consumer Commission, said today that national ex-ante rules have been considered "at various points", but the country is not developing its own digital markets regime.

"We have observed that many overseas jurisdictions have moved towards ex-ante regulation, but that has come with some mixed results," he told a conference in Singapore today.

Speaking in his personal capacity, he said the CCS has instead pursued a voluntary approach to regulation that "balances" the interests of online markets and technology innovation.

He cited the agency's [code of conduct](#) for companies operating in digital markets as an example of this approach.

Other enforcers in the region have pursued and advocated for new ex-ante rules covering digital markets.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission has [called for](#) a digital markets enforcement framework that resembles the DMA or the UK's [Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act](#).

South Korea's [Online Platform Fairness Act](#), which would target large online tech companies, has also been backed by the country's national assembly.

Speaking to GCR today, Koh said that multiple CCS studies into the digital economy have shown “healthy, vibrant competition” that is not hampered by “prohibitive” barriers to entry.

“With that, we don't think that there is such a strong impetus for us to consider a DMA-equivalent type of legislation,” he said.

The CCS has also worked alongside the tech industry and other government departments to determine what would work best for the country's digital economy, Koh said.

The agency has not yet found “pervasive” harms that warrant “heavy-handed” action, he added.

However, the watchdog's voluntary code of conduct does come with “very close monitoring”, leaving the agency “prepared to act” in case certain issues require it to “take a different course”, Koh said.

He spoke at the International Bar Association's 35th Communications and Competition Law Conference in Singapore. The event continues tomorrow.



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