

Bundesverband Deutsche Startups e.V. | Schiffbauerdamm 40 | 10117 Berlin

Christian Miele, Präsident

To:  
Philipp Schindler  
Chief Business Officer, Google Inc.

Schiffbauerdamm 40  
10117 Berlin

Tel.: +49 (0) 30 60 98 95 9 – 10

## Google should share the burden of refunding consumers.

info@deutschestartups.org  
www.deutschestartups.org

Dear Mr. Schindler

In the COVID-19 era, leading companies from Germany and around the world have gone to unprecedented lengths for consumers. This includes issuing no-questions-asked refunds for goods and services that can no longer be consumed, given the current extraordinary global situation.

By selectively enforcing strict payment terms on larger partners - especially from the travel & transportation industry - for its services provided to market those products, Google is opting out of sharing the responsibility to do right by consumers.

The German Startups Association, on behalf of a consortium of 8 digital companies representing €75M+ (\$80M+) in advertising revenues for Google in Q1 2020, calls on Google to join its partners to share the burden.

We, the undersigned, make the following recommendations:

- Immediately pause the enforcement of payments on companies that have received taxpayer-funded government financial aid.
- Enact a consistent policy toward refunds or credits on advertising services provided for products that COVID-19 has prevented consumers from using.
- Offer a consistent and flexible way for Google partners to restructure and postpone payment terms for advertising services and other fees incurred in Q1 2020.

Many businesses are now seeking government liquidity to remain solvent. Unless greater flexibility is exercised by Google, many of its advertising partners will be forced to use government loans to pay their debts. Badly-needed funding will flow into Google's coffers on the backs of taxpayers in Germany and around the world.

With over \$41 billion in Q1 2020 revenue, Google is the leading player in the global digital economy. As a consortium of businesses that contributes to the health and diversity of that economy, we call on Google to demonstrate the leadership and solidarity necessary to navigate us all through this challenging time.

Yours sincerely,

Christian Miele

President, German Startups Association

Christian Miele, Präsident

Schiffbauerdamm 40  
10117 Berlin

Tel.: +49 (0) 30 60 98 95 9 – 10

[info@deutschestartups.org](mailto:info@deutschestartups.org)  
[www.deutschestartups.org](http://www.deutschestartups.org)



On behalf of:

Felix Schneider, CEO, Dreamlines

Jochen Engert, CEO, FlixBus

Johannes Reck, CEO, GetYourGuide

Dustin Figge, CEO, Homelike

Dr. Patrick Andrä, CEO, HomeToGo

Naren Shaam, CEO, Omio

Julian Weselek & Julian Stiefel, Co-CEOs, Turlane

Axel Hefer, CEO, Trivago