At the request of the French government, the Autorité will issue an opinion on the margins of wholesale importers and distributors of basic food items in Martinique

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Background

On 29 January 2025, the *Autorité de la concurrence* received a request from the Ministers of the French Overseas Territories and the Economy, on the basis of Article L. 462-1 of the French Commercial Code (*Code de commerce*), for an opinion on the margins of wholesale importers and distributors in Martinique.

The request follows the agreement signed on 16 October 2024 to combat the high cost of living in Martinique, which aims notably to increase transparency in food pricing and provides for the request to the *Autorité de la concurrence*.

As part of the opinion, the *Autorité* will analyse how prices are set and how margins are determined and can accrue along the entire food retail value chain in Martinique. In addition, the *Autorité* will make any recommendations deemed useful.

Context of the request

On 16 October 2024, the French State signed an agreement with the territorial collectivity of Martinique and several players – including wholesalers and distributors – to combat the high cost of living in Martinique. In particular, the

protocol aims to increase transparency in food pricing. The measures proposed by the agreement are based on three principles: reducing the price of more than 6,000 food items in Martinique; taking action to lower the prices of all food items in Martinique; and rethinking the economic model of the French overseas territories.

Scope of the request

In the agreement signed on 16 October 2024, the French government undertook to request an opinion from the *Autorité de la concurrence*. On 16 January 2025, the Ministers of the French Overseas Territories and the Economy requested an opinion from the *Autorité*, on the basis of Article L. 462-1 of the French Commercial Code.

In the opinion, the *Autorité* will – following Opinion 09-A-45 of 8 September 2009 on import and distribution mechanisms for consumer goods in the French overseas territories and Opinion 19-A-12 of 4 July 2019 on the functioning of competition in the French overseas territories – analyse how prices are set and how margins are determined and can accrue along the entire food retail value chain in Martinique.

Based on its observations, the *Autorité* will make any recommendations deemed useful to improve transparency in how prices of basis food items in Martinique are set and how margins are determined.

Overview of the action taken by the Autorité in the French overseas territories:

Improving competitive conditions in the French overseas territories is a key priority for the *Autorité*. Since its creation in 2008, the *Autorité* has issued:

- 46 antitrust decisions, with total fines of €231 million;

- 17 opinions, including two cross-sector opinions on the functioning of competition in the French overseas territories;

- 80 merger control decisions.

Contact(s)

Nicola Crawford
Communications Officer
+33155040151
Contact us by e-mail