# The Autorité de la concurrence clears the acquisition by Banijay Gaming (Betclic) of the JOA group, which operates 33 casinos in France

Published on November 04, 2026

---

### Background

On 7 October 2026, Banijay Gaming notified the *Autorité de la concurrence* of its plan to acquire exclusive control of the JOA group, which operates 33 casinos in France. The *Autorité* has today cleared the transaction without conditions.

Although it had previously examined transactions in both the land-based casino and online gambling sectors, the *Autorité* analysed, for the first time, a transaction creating an operator active in both channels in France.

## The parties to the transaction

Lov Group is a diversified group whose subsidiary, Banijay Group, is active in the online gambling sector in France, including sports betting, casino games, poker and horse betting, through Banijay Gaming and its Betclic brand.

JOA is a group operating in the casino industry, exclusively in France. It currently operates 33 casinos across the country. Its casino operations account for the vast majority of its revenue, with the remainder generated by restaurants, bars and hotels located within its casino complexes, which it operates under public

service concession agreements.

## Competitive analysis

The *Autorité* found that the parties' activities did not overlap, as Lov Group is not active in the casino market in France. In this regard, the *Autorité* considered that the potential legalisation of online casinos in France was not sufficiently plausible at this stage to warrant an assessment of the effects of the transaction under such a scenario.

The online casino market

The *Autorité* considered whether online casino games should be taken into account in the assessment of conglomerate effects. Although online casinos remain prohibited in France, their potential legalisation has been under discussion among industry stakeholders and members of the French parliament for several years. Accordingly, the *Autorité* was not required to assess the effects of the transaction in light of such a possibility, as legalisation remained hypothetical at the date of this decision and did not constitute a sufficiently plausible scenario within the meaning of its merger guidelines.

However, the investigation found that the online poker market and the casino market – particularly table games, including poker – could be considered related within the meaning of the *Autorité*'s merger guidelines, given the existence of a shared player base across online and land-based poker. The investigation further found that the increasingly younger age profile of casino customers is contributing to a degree of convergence between online and land-based poker player bases.

More specifically, with regard to poker, the investigation – which involved consulting the parties' competitors and the French national gambling authority (

*Autorité nationale des jeux* – ANJ) – found that, despite differences in how the game is played, poker players are inclined to switch between land-based casinos and online platforms.

The *Autorité* therefore considered that the new entity could pursue an omnichannel strategy, including through commercial bundling across its various activities, and accordingly assessed the potential effects of such a strategy on the markets concerned.

Taking into account the parties' market shares, the presence of significant competitors in their respective markets and the limited contribution of poker to the overall business of JOA's casinos, the *Autorité* concluded that the transaction was unlikely to harm competition through conglomerate effects.

**DECISION 26-DCC-215 OF 4 NOVEMBER 2026**

The Autorité de la concurrence clears the acquisition by Banijay Gaming (Betclic) of the JOA group, which operates 33 casinos in France

The full text of the decision (in French) will be available soon

## Contact(s)

Nicola Crawford
Communications Officer
+33155040151

Contact us by e-mail