AURA buying alliance (Auchan, Intermarché, Casino): the Investigation Services have notified a report to the members of the alliance as part of the competitive assessment procedure

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Background

In accordance with Article L. 462-10, II of the French Commercial Code (*Code de commerce*), the Investigation Services have conducted an *ex post* competitive assessment of the AURA buying alliance, taking into account its impact on producers, processors and distributors, as well as on final consumers.

The AURA buying alliance, which brings together Intermarché, Auchan and Casino, covers food products, including both manufacturer brand products and retailer own-label products, as well as the negotiation of international services.

The competitive assessment, set out in a report notified to AURA and its members, identifies practices arising from the implementation of the alliance that could significantly harm competition within the meaning of Articles L. 420-1 and L. 420-2 of the French Commercial Code.

The findings established by the Investigation Services at the report stage are without prejudice to the decision that will ultimately be taken by the Board of the *Autorité de la concurrence*.

Context

On 9 January 2026, the *Autorité de la concurrence* initiated its first competitive assessment procedure, concerning, in particular, the AURA buying alliance (see press release of 9 January 2026).

As a reminder, the purpose of the competition assessment was to examine the *ex post* effects of the buying alliance on the functioning of competition, i.e. after the alliance came into effect. The assessment was conducted at a time of changes in the competitive structure of the retail sector and growing concerns about the upstream agricultural sector.

A particularly extensive investigation

The Investigation Services received comments from around ten interested third parties (including several professional associations) and interviewed nearly 150 suppliers, both members and non-members of the AURA buying alliance. An in-depth econometric analysis, based on extensive data collection from member retailers of the AURA buying alliance, was also conducted.

A series of practices that could harm competition, not offset by a sufficient contribution to economic progress

Based on the extensive information gathered during the investigation, the Investigation Services have, at this stage, identified practices that could significantly harm competition, within the meaning of Articles L. 420-1 and L. 420-2 of the French Commercial Code, affecting both upstream supply markets and retail markets. At this stage, the Investigation Services consider that such harms are not offset by a sufficient contribution by the AURA buying alliance to economic progress.

Next steps

The notification of the report opens a two-month period during which the parties may submit their comments and, where appropriate, propose corrective measures.

Subsequently, the Board will then decide whether any competition concerns have arisen, whether those concerns are offset by a sufficient contribution to economic progress and, where appropriate, whether the proposed corrective measures are adequate.

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