

30 January 2012: The Autorité de la concurrence signs an agreement today with the Government of Nouvelle-Calédonie

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An initial mission will be dispatched during the first half of 2012 with a view to formulating recommendations for the local public authorities regarding the strengthening of institutional and administrative capacities as well as regarding the retail grocery sector

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The president of the *Autorité de la concurrence*, Bruno Lasserre, the president of the Government of *Nouvelle-Calédonie* (New Caledonia), Harold Martin, and the High Commissioner of the French Republic have concluded a framework agreement on technical assistance with a view to developing the expertise of the overseas territory and its tools for fighting anticompetitive practices.

New Caledonia seeks out the expertise of the *Autorité de la concurrence*

New Caledonia, which has become the competent authority in matters of competition enforcement since the entry into force of the organic law of 19 March 1999, intends to guarantee the smooth running of markets for the benefit of local businesses and consumers. It has requested the *Autorité de la concurrence* to make a diagnosis of the competitive situation in its territory and to offer its expertise in its capacity as regulator.

New Caledonia shares certain characteristics with the overseas départements, in particular its insularity, its remoteness from metropolitan France and very narrow

local markets. The Autorité de la concurrence already has extensive experience in this respect, as evidenced by the 15 decisions and 5 opinions it has issued in connection with the overseas départements (please refer to the **1st issue of the *Déclics* brochure**, dedicated to competition in the overseas *départements*). Furthermore, a number of overseas départements companies are also active in New Caledonia.

That notwithstanding, the Autorité's competitive diagnosis will naturally take into consideration New Caledonia's distinctive features and specific difficulties. The Autorité will more particularly endeavour to ascertain that the conduct of economic agents does not lead to a seizing up of market mechanisms. To that end, it will base its diagnosis on observations in situ and on New Caledonia's department of economic affairs.

The mission of the *Autorité* will start in the 1st half of 2012

The Autorité will dispatch a mission during the first half of 2012 to analyse and make recommendations for the local public authorities as regards the retail grocery sector and the strengthening of institutional capacities. It will follow these up in due course with other specialized missions and training sessions.

This gradual build-up in competition regulation for the benefit of the population of New Caledonia will be an important stimulus to drive prices down and to boost the dynamism of the local economy.

This however is just one of many other instruments that could be implemented to that end, such as promoting the territory and local productive investments, and developing procurement on a regional scale.

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