13 March 2013: Food retail

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The Autorité de la concurrence has decided to open an in-depth examination of the acquisition of sole control of Monoprix by Casino

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The Autorité de la concurrence was notified of the exclusive take-over of Monoprix by Casino on 6 February, at which date the companies satisfied merger filing requirements.

The Monoprix company heads the Monoprix group, which is active in the retail food distribution sector. Monoprix, previously owned jointly by Casino and Galeries Lafayette, operates more than 400 outlets in France, under the banners Monoprix, Inno, Monop', Dailymonop, Monop'station, Beautymonop and Naturalia.

In the context of examination of the case, and after an initial consultation with the market players, the Autorité believes that the transaction raises serious concerns that it will harm competition and requires the opening of an in-depth examination (phase 2).

The transaction is liable to strengthen Casino's position in a certain number of shopping areas in Paris

In particular, the transaction is liable to bring about a significant strengthening of the competitive position of the Casino group in a certain number of shopping areas in Paris, bearing in mind the presence in such areas, alongside stores under the Monoprix or Monop' banner, of several stores under the Casino group banner (Casino, Franprix, Leaderprice).

During the phase 2 examination, the Autorité will conduct a more extensive consultation with market players about the competitive situation in the areas concerned and, in particular, on the question of competitive pressure exerted on Paris supermarkets by the other forms of food trading, as well as by hypermarkets in the nearby outer suburbs.

If it proves necessary, the Autorité will also consult market players on remedies that may address competition concerns.

The regulations provide that this examination should take place, in principle, within 65 business days starting from the opening of the phase 2 examination, and may be extended if necessary, for example to finalise commitments or to take account of any new facts which emerge.

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