The Autorité de la concurrence clears the takeover of the company The Kooples Group by the group Maus Frères (Lacoste, Aigle and Gant)

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On 17 April 2019, the group Maus Frères notified the *Autorité de la concurrence* his project of taking over the company The Kooples Group. By a decision issued this day, the *Autorité* clears the transaction without conditions.

Parties to the transaction

The family group Maus Frères incorporated under Swiss law is mainly active in the retail distribution of clothing and footwear, through the Lacoste, Aigle and Gant brands, globally, as well as in the DIY distribution sector in Switzerland.

The Kooples Group is a family company incorporated under Belgian law, mainly active in the retail distribution of clothing and footwear, through The Kooples brand. The Kooples Group is present in 14 countries (France, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, United States, Spain, Ireland, United Kingdom, Denmark, Asia Pacific, Canada, Netherlands, Luxembourg and Italy). In 2018, it generated an estimated turnover of approximately 227 million euros.

The transaction is not likely to harm competition

In particular, the *Autorité* examined whether the acquisition of The Kooples brand by an actor already holding well-known ready-to-wear brands is likely to restrict competition in the retail clothing and footwear retail markets, especially at the

local level where the parties' stores are located in the same catchment areas.

It found that in each of these areas, consumers will continue to benefit from alternative offers equivalent to the parties' brands, in terms of price and commercial positioning (ranges). These competing stores remain in sufficient numbers not to encourage the new entity to increase the price of the items sold or to degrade the quality of the services provided in its stores.

The *Autorité* therefore cleared this takeover without conditions.

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