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The Autorité de la concurrence clears the acquisition of *Le Parisien* and *Aujourd'hui en France* by the LVMH Group

> *Version française*

The Autorité de la concurrence has reviewed the acquisition of sole control of the publishing and marketing activities of *Le Parisien* and its nationwide version *Aujourd'hui en France* by the LVMH group. Today it unconditionally cleared the transaction.

The parties and the transaction

LVMH is a company incorporated under French law and controlled by the Arnault family. It is a group that is mainly active in the luxury goods sector, but also has interests in the press and media sector. In this respect, LVMH is responsible for the publication of several titles, notably the daily *Les Echos* and the weekly *Investir – Le Journal des Finances*.

Under the transaction cleared today, LVMH will be taking exclusive control from Les Editions P. Amaury of the companies responsible for editing, printing and marketing of the regional daily *Le Parisien* and its national version *Aujourd'hui en France*.

Competitive impact of the transaction

After consulting with the players in the sectors in question, the Autorité dismissed the risks of competition in the various markets (readership and advertising).

- *Concerning an overlap of activities*

While the transaction may result in certain overlapping of activities in the markets for publication of press titles, website operation, advertising and the sale of online advertising space not linked to online searches, these are not such as to harm competition in these markets.

- *Concerning the risk of foreclosing the advertising sales market*

Furthermore, the transaction reinforces the vertical integration of the purchaser: LVMH, present upstream as an advertiser via its various subsidiaries, sees its market share reinforced downstream through the takeover of new print media titles. The acquisition of ***Le Parisien*** will notably enable LVMH to own the only title active in commercial advertising in the French regional daily press (PQR) for Ile-de-France [Paris region]. The risks of harm to competition can be dismissed, however, due in particular to the narrowness of the PQR market in Ile–de-France and the unlikelihood of the introduction of a so-called "foreclosure" strategy, since LVMH has not favoured its own brands hitherto in selling advertising space in the titles owned by the group, nor is there any additional incentive for it to do so as a result of the present transaction.

- *Concerning tied sales of titles and bundled advertising*

Finally, the operation enables LVMH to expand its portfolio of written press titles. The Autorité has nevertheless not considered there to be a risk of the group exercising a leverage effect through offers combining its different titles. The Autorité notes in particular that the readership of ***Le Parisien*** and ***Aujourd'hui en France*** and that of Les Echos and Investir are substantially different, thus reducing any interest in combined sales of these titles. Furthermore, with respect to the sale of advertising space, any combined agreements between its various titles that the new entity might implement once the transaction has been completed would not involve any competition problems either, in view in particular of the lack of attractiveness of such offers.

As a result, the transaction is not likley to harm competition, which is confirmed by the market test conducted within the framework of this case.

Therefore, the Autorité de la concurrence has unconditionally cleared the transaction.

> See the full text of decision 15-DCC-139

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