

21 January 2016: Advertising sector

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The Autorité de la concurrence has decided to open an in-depth examination of the acquisition of the Metrobus Group by the JCDecaux Group

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On 23 November 2015, JCDecaux SA notified the *Autorité* of its proposed acquisition of the *Régie Publicitaire des Transports Parisiens Metrobus Publicité* SA (Metrobus) and its subsidiaries from the Publicis Group. As part of its examination of the case, and following an initial consultation of market operators, the *Autorité* considers that the transaction requires the opening of an in-depth examination (phase 2).

As part of this examination (phase 2), the *Autorité* will engage in extensive consultations with market operators, including media agencies and advertisers. It will, in particular, look into the question of the definition of relevant markets and examine whether the transaction is likely to harm competition through horizontal or conglomerate effects. As such, it will in particular consider the ability of competitors to stimulate competition. Furthermore, it will examine whether the strengthening of the new entity in the downstream market of outdoor advertising could bring it certain competitive advantages as regards tenders launched by public authorities and transport companies for the allocation of advertising space.

If necessary, the *Autorité* will also consult market operators as regards any remedies that may need to be provided for any distortion of competition.

Legislation provides that this examination should, in principle, be completed within 65 working days as from the launch of phase 2, and may be extended if necessary, for example to finalise commitments or take into account any new facts.

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