The Autorité de la concurrence fines Mariage Frères teas for hindering its distributors' commercial freedom

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Following a report prepared by the local network of the Minister of the Economy and submitted by the Directorate General for Competition Policy, Consumer Affairs and Fraud Control (DGCCRF), the *Autorité de la concurrence* has imposed a €4 million penalty on the Mariage Frères group – one of France's leading producers of premium teas – for hindering the commercial freedom of its distributors for almost 15 years by forbidding them to sell its branded products online, on the one hand, and to resell its products to other retailers, on the other. These practices, which limited intra-brand competition and partitioned markets, constitute a cartel.

In a sector where online sales are enjoying strong growth, the ban on selling the products concerned on the Internet was likely to restrict the development of distributors' business. By coupling this practice with the ban on reselling to other distributors, Mariage Frères also deprived end consumers of the possibility of enjoying better prices as a result of effective competition between all distributors.

PRESS RELEASE OF 11 DECEMBER 2023

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