

The Belgian Competition Authority dismisses the request for interim measures concerning the amendments to the invitation rules of riders to Global Champions Tour's jumping competitions

Miss Lisa Nooren, a rider established in Belgium, and Henk Nooren Handelsstal SPRL, a stable and horse owner also established in Belgium, filed a complaint on 13 November 2017 against, on the one hand, the Fédération Equestre Internationale and, on the other hand, Global Champions League SPRL and Tops Trading Belgium SPRL (hereinafter collectively GLOBAL).

Concurrently with the review of their complaint on the merits, the complainants lodged a request for interim measures in order to amend the newly adopted rules governing the invitation of riders to Global Champions Tour's jumping competitions (hereinafter GCT), a jumping competition series for individual riders organised by GLOBAL. The main purpose of the request was to remove any link between the invitation criteria to GCT competitions and the membership in a team participating in the Global Champions League, a (different) team competition series recently launched by GLOBAL.

Following the annulment by the Market Court of a first decision of the College, and the recusal of the members of the initial College, a newly constituted College reconsidered the request for interim measures.

After considering the consequences of these annulment and recusal judgments on the conduct of the proceedings and on its jurisdiction, the College carried out a *prima facie* analysis of the evidence of a competition law infringement and of the existence of a serious and imminent damage, which would be difficult to repair.

Following this analysis, the College did not exclude the existence of possible restrictive effects of the new rules on invitations to GCT competitions or a possible lack of proportion between these effects and the objectives pursued by the new rules. The College however considered that it did not have sufficient evidence at this stage to consider that the conditions of Article IV.64 §1 of the Code of Economic Law are met. Consequently, the College declared the complainants' request for interim measures admissible but unfounded.

This decision by the College prejudices in no way the analysis on the merits of the complainants' complaint.

For further information, please contact:

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The Belgian Competition Authority (BCA) is an independent administrative authority that contributes to the definition and implementation of competition policy in Belgium. Concretely, the BCA pursues anti-competitive practices, such as cartels and abuses of a dominant position, and reviews the main merger operations. The BCA cooperates with the other competition authorities of the member states of the European Union and the European Commission within the European Competition Network (ECN)