



Determination No. M/03/041 of the Competition Authority, dated 16th January 2004, under Section 21 of the Competition Act, 2002

Notification No. M/03/041 – The proposed acquisition by Alpha Publications Limited of all the issued share capital of Midland Tribune Printing Limited

Introduction

1. On 17th December 2003 date the Competition Authority, in accordance with Section 18 (1) of the Competition Act, 2002 (“the Act”) was notified, on a mandatory basis, of a proposal whereby Alpha Publications Limited (APL) would acquire all the issued share capital of Midland Tribune Printing Limited (MTPL).

The Parties

2. APL is a private limited company recently incorporated in Ireland and is a wholly owned subsidiary of Tontine Rooms Holding Company Limited (TRH), which is incorporated in Northern Ireland. TRH trades under the name of Alpha Newspaper Group, which is involved in newspaper publishing primarily in Northern Ireland.
3. MPTL publishes The Midland Tribune and Tullamore Tribune, both of which are weekly regional newspapers. MPTL also owns the titles “The Harlequin” and “The Limerick Tribune”, which have not been published for approximately 10 years.

Analysis

4. There is no overlap in the parties’ activities as they operate in different geographic regions. TRH’s publications are circulated primarily in Northern Ireland. Its only circulation in the State are approximately [] copies of the Ulster Gazette sold in County Monaghan and the sale of [] copies of the Strabane Weekley News in East Donegal. Advertising revenues derived from customers in the State are negligible. MPTL’s circulation revenues are derived solely from readership in Offaly and surrounding counties. Accordingly the transaction does not give rise to competition concerns.

Determination

The Competition Authority, in accordance with Section 21(2) of the Competition Act, 2002, has determined that, in its opinion, the result of the proposed acquisition will not be to substantially lessen competition in markets for goods and services in the State and, accordingly, that the acquisition may be put into effect.



Determination of the Competition Authority

For the Competition Authority

**Edward Henneberry
Member of the Competition Authority**

16th January 2004