

PRESS RELEASE

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The Belgian Competition Authority imposes a fine on Le Creuset for implementing a resale price maintenance policy ("RPM")

The Investigation and Prosecution Service of the Belgian Competition Authority adopted today a settlement decision in which it fined Le Creuset Benelux ("Le Creuset") for having implemented a resale price maintenance policy in relation to its distributors. The fine amounts to €490,112.

The undertaking acknowledged its involvement in the infringement and accepted the terms of the settlement proposed by the Investigation and Prosecution Service.

The infringement in question, which lasted 6 and a half years, consisted of a series of practices whereby the resale prices recommended by Le Creuset to its distributors were in reality imposed resale prices. In particular, Le Creuset undertook to monitor the correct application of its pricing policy and intervened with its distributors when non-compliant prices were observed, where necessary using pressure tactics and sanctions to ensure the effectiveness of its policy. Le Creuset also supervised the promotional activities of its distributors and provided its distributors with information on their competitors, in particular on price changes made or planned by the latter.

Le Creuset's policy aimed to guarantee a certain price level on the market by limiting the ability of distributors to determine their own resale prices to consumers, with the consequence of restricting price competition between distributors. The imposition of resale prices is considered to be a hardcore infringement of Article IV.1, §1 of the Code of Economic Law and Article 101, §1 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which prohibit anti-competitive agreements between undertakings.

The decision of the Investigation and Prosecution Service will be published shortly on the website of the [Belgian Competition Authority](https://www.belgiancompetition.be).

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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)