

PRESS RELEASE

Nr 16/2024
02 May 2024

The Belgian Competition Authority concludes its preliminary analysis of the Batopin project

The Investigation and Prosecution Service of the Belgian Competition Authority confirms that it has concluded its preliminary analysis of the agreement entered into by the country's four largest banks (BNP Paribas Fortis, KBC, ING and Belfius) to replace their ATMs with a unified ATM network managed by the company Batopin, which is currently being deployed.

At this stage, the Investigation and Prosecution Service has communicated to Batopin the results of its preliminary analysis, which focuses on both the accessibility to the ATMs of the Batopin network and thereby the access to cash, as well as on the quality of service, notably in terms of waiting time.

These results raise concerns about the consequences of the Batopin project for consumers in spite of the agreement concluded in March 2023 between the federal government and Febelfin on access to ATMs, which has significantly improved the situation.

These concerns relate, on the one hand, to the reduction in the number of ATMs and the additional distance to be travelled to access them and, on the other hand, to the consequences of the increased intensity of use of the ATMs in the Batopin network on the quality of service.

Batopin has already provided a series of observations in response to the preliminary analysis of the Investigation and Prosecution Service and is actively collaborating to the ongoing investigation. At this stage, the outcome and duration of this investigation remain open.

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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)