

The Belgian Competition Authority launches a general inquiry into sectoral price revision and indexation mechanisms

The Belgian Competition Authority (“BCA”) has decided to open [a general investigation](#) into sectoral price revision and indexation mechanisms in the Belgian economy. These mechanisms are widespread and can fuel inflationary trends. By using the general investigation tool for the first time, the BCA will analyse in depth the economic and regulatory dynamics surrounding these sectoral price revision and indexation mechanisms, from the point of view of their compliance with competition law.

Pursuant to Article IV.47 of the Code of Economic Law, the BCA may carry out general or sectoral investigations if there are indications of market failure. For several years now, Belgium has been facing inflationary trends that are often higher than those of neighbouring countries. While factors linked to the international geoeconomic situation (pandemic, energy crisis) partly explain this phenomenon, national structural problems, such as the widespread or systematic use of sectoral price indexation mechanisms, may also contribute to it.

Concretely, this first general inquiry will identify existing types of sectoral price review and indexation mechanisms used in Belgium. It will then assess which of these mechanisms and practices, by their composition, development, implementation and effects, are potentially contrary to the rules of Belgian and European competition law. In doing so, the Authority will examine in particular how these practices may affect the price level of the products and services of the undertakings concerned and the more general price level in certain categories of services and goods, and ultimately the distribution of wealth between economic operators, and the welfare of Belgian consumers in particular. Conversely, good practices could equally be identified and serve as model mechanisms.

At the end of the investigation, if necessary, the BCA will propose recommendations to improve the applicable regulatory framework. Transversal by nature, this general inquiry will cover several key sectors of the economy, which have been identified as being particularly affected by indexation mechanisms.

The survey will be carried out over a period of 12 to 14 months. It will start with an initial phase of investigation by means of requests for information and hearings of sectoral organisations, undertakings and experts, including other public institutions with a regulatory or supervisory role in the economy. The preliminary findings of the investigation will be subject to public consultation. The BCA will publish the final findings of the investigation in early 2026.

This general inquiry is part of a broader effort to strengthen the BCAs preventive action through sector-specific analyses. The BCA plans to conduct such investigations on a regular basis in the future, taking into account the resources at its disposal.

For further information, you may contact:

Axel Desmedt

President

Tel: +32 (2) 277 92 80

E-mail: axel.desmedt@bma-abc.be

Website: www.belgiancompetition.be

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)

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