



**Determination No. M/04/030 of the Competition Authority, dated 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2004, under Section 21 of the Competition Act, 2002**

**Notification No. M/04/030 – Proposed acquisition by Celtic News Group Limited of The Westmeath Offaly Independent Print Company Limited, The Westmeath Offaly Independent (Holdings) Limited and The Westmeath Examiner Limited**

**Introduction**

1. On 6<sup>th</sup> May 2004 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 Celtic News Group Limited (Celtic) would acquire The Westmeath Offaly Independent Print Company Limited, The Westmeath Offaly Independent (Holdings) Limited and The Westmeath Examiner Limited (together “the target companies”). The Authority notified the Minister for Enterprise Trade & Employment (“the Minister”) and the parties that it considers the proposed transaction to be a media merger within the meaning of section 23 of the Act.
2. As part of the same notification, the Authority was notified of three previous acquisitions, whereby Nicholas Nally transferred 4,042 shares in The Westmeath Examiner Limited to The Westmeath Offaly Independent Print Company Limited on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1999, and later 4,500 shares on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2000 and 6,826 shares on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2000 to the same company, as evidenced by a Deed of Conveyance and Confirmation of Title to Shares dated 29<sup>th</sup> April 2004. The parties believe that these transfers were required to be notified to the Minister pursuant to the Mergers, Take-Overs and Monopolies (Control) Act 1978.

**The Parties**

3. Celtic publishes The Meath Chronicle, a weekly regional newspaper targeted at Co. Meath and the Anglo-Celt, also a weekly regional newspaper targeted at Co. Cavan. The Meath Chronicle Limited, as well as publishing The Meath Chronicle, also prints newspapers on behalf of third parties and prints over 40 other titles on a contract basis, including the Westmeath Examiner, the Westmeath Independent and the Offaly Independent which are the subject of the proposed transaction. Similarly, Anglo-Celt Limited, as well as publishing the Anglo-Celt newspaper, also prints a range of other titles. The acquisition of Anglo-Celt Limited by Celtic was approved by the Authority earlier this year.
4. The business of the target companies is the publication of the following titles: The Westmeath Examiner, the Westmeath Independent, and the Offaly Independent whose circulation is targeted at Mullingar and 20 miles environs, Athlone and 20 miles environs, and Tullamore and Northwest Offaly respectively.



**The Competition Authority**  
An tÚdarás Iomaíochta

### **Analysis**

5. The competitive overlap between the parties' newspapers is minimal, since the newspapers concerned are targeted at different regions and only overlap in the border areas of the geographic areas where they are circulated.

### **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 by Celtic News Group Limited of The Westmeath Offaly Independent Print Company Limited, The Westmeath Offaly Independent (Holdings) Limited and The Westmeath Examiner Limited, in addition to the previous acquisitions of shares referred to in paragraph 2, 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.

**For the Competition Authority**

**Edward Henneberry**  
**Member of the Competition Authority**

**2<sup>nd</sup> June 2004**