



Determination No. M/04/045 of the Competition Authority, dated 3rd September 2004, under Section 21 of the Competition Act, 2002

Notification No. M/04/045 – Acquisition by Willis Group Holdings Limited of Coyle Hamilton Holdings Limited

Introduction

1. On 4th August 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 Willis Group Holdings Limited (“Willis”) would acquire 51.7% of Coyle Hamilton Holdings Limited (“Coyle Hamilton”). Pursuant to the agreement between the parties, Willis will subsequently acquire the remaining 48.3% of Coyle Hamilton’s issued share capital.

The Parties

2. Willis is one of the world’s leading risk management and insurance intermediaries. In the State, Willis carries on business through Willis Insurance Services (Ireland) Limited (“Willis Insurance”) and Willis Risk Management (Ireland) Limited (“Willis Risk Management”). Willis Insurance provides insurance broking and consultancy services. Willis Risk Management provides risk management and safety consultancy advice.
3. Coyle Hamilton is incorporated in Ireland and provides non-life insurance broking in the insurance segments comprising motor insurance, property insurance, liability insurance (including employer’s, public, products and professional) and other insurance (including personal accident insurance, travel insurance, accident and sickness insurance, marine transit insurance, credit insurance, miscellaneous financial loss insurance). In addition, Coyle Hamilton provides related risk assessment consultancy services, provided through one of its subsidiaries Loss Control Services Limited, which trades as “Nifast”. It also offers re-insurance distribution services and life assurance and pension distribution services.

Analysis

4. The parties’ activities overlap in the provision of non-life insurance broking, re-insurance distribution, risk management consultancy services and life assurance and pension distribution. For each of these activities the parties combined shares vary but do not exceed [10-20%]. For each activity there is sufficient competitive constraints on the merged entity. For non-life insurance distribution the principal competitors include AON and Marsh. In addition there are a number of other providers who offer some or all aspects of non-life insurance broking including Wright’s, AA Insurance Services, Culletons, McCarthy’s, JTL and Frank Glennon. In addition there are hundreds of other brokers and a



number of insurance companies that sell directly to consumers. With regard to life assurance and pension distribution the largest provider in Ireland is Marsh/Mercer and there is also competition from direct sales, banks and others. For risk management consultancy services, the Authority is satisfied that there are sufficient competitive constraints. For re-insurance, AON and Guy Carpenter (a subsidiary of Marsh) are the largest providers in this field and there are also other providers.

5. The proposed transaction does not therefore give rise to a substantial lessening of competition.

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 Willis Group Holdings Limited of Coyle Hamilton Holdings Limited 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