

Notification of a joint venture**(Case No IV/36.836/F3)**

(98/C 16/03)

(Text with EEA relevance)

1. On 16 December 1997 the Commission received notification of agreements pursuant to Article 4 of Council Regulation No 17 by which the French company Yoplait SA (a wholly owned subsidiary of Sodiaal, a leading French cooperative dairy group), Sodima International SA (a subsidiary of Yoplait), the Finnish company Valio Ltd (a member of the Valio group of companies) and its Swedish subsidiary Valio Sverige AS have created a joint venture. The purpose of the cooperation is to distribute and sell fresh dairy products (principally yoghurt, fromage frais and desserts) manufactured by the parties or their designees and sold under the 'Yoplait' brand name in Finland, Sweden, certain Baltic countries and subsequently in certain western parts of Russia. The joint venture will have exclusive marketing and sales rights for Yoplait products in these territories. The joint venture company will source products on a competitive basis, principally from its parent companies, and will appoint Valio as its agent for the sale and distribution of the products.

2. On preliminary examination, the Commission finds that the notified joint venture could fall within the scope of Regulation No 17.

3. The Commission invites interested third parties to submit any observations they may have on the proposed operation.

4. Observations must reach the Commission not later than 10 days following the date of this publication. Observations can be sent by fax (No: (32 2) 296 98 02) or by post under reference IV/36.836/F3 to:

European Commission,
Directorate-General for Competition (DG IV),
Directorate F,
Office 2/75,
Avenue de Cortenberg/Kortenberglaan 150,
B-1040 Brussels.
