Prior notification of a concentration

(Case M.8553 — Banco Santander/Banco Popular Group)

(Text with EEA relevance)

(2017/C 234/06)

1. On 14 July 2017, the Commission received notification of a proposed concentration pursuant to Article 4 of Council Regulation (EC) No 139/2004 [1] by which Banco Santander, S.A. ('Santander', Spain) acquires, within the meaning of Article 3(1)(b) of the Merger Regulation control of the whole of Banco Popular Español S.A. ('BPE', Spain) by way of a purchase of shares.

2. The business activities of the undertakings concerned are:

— Santander, active in banking, treasury and insurance services, is the parent company of an international group of banking and financial companies, operating mainly in Spain, other European countries including Portugal, the United Kingdom, Latin America and the United States,

— BPE is the parent company of the BPE group, which comprises the following financial entities: Banco Pastor, BPE Banca Privada, TotalBank and Banco BPE Portugal. BPE also holds a stake in Targobank and WiZink. BPE provides banking services as well as insurance services, both in Spain and Portugal. BPE is listed in the Madrid, Barcelona, Bilbao and Valencia stock exchanges.

3. On preliminary examination, the Commission finds that the notified transaction could fall within the scope of the Merger Regulation. However, the final decision on this point is reserved.

4. The Commission invites interested third parties to submit their possible observations on the proposed operation to the Commission.

Observations must reach the Commission not later than 10 days following the date of this publication. Observations can be sent to the Commission by fax (+32 22964301), by email to COMP-MERGER-REGISTRY@ec.europa.eu or by post, under reference M.8553 — Banco Santander/Banco Popular Group, to the following address:

European Commission
Directorate-General for Competition
Merger Registry
1049 Bruxelles/Brussel
BELGIQUE/BELGIË

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[1] OJ L 24, 29.1.2004, p. 1 (the 'Merger Regulation').