Prior notification of a concentration

(Case M.10187 - BBC/ITV/Channel 4/Freesat)

Candidate case for simplified procedure

(Text with EEA relevance)

(2021/C 143/07)

1. On 8 April 2021, the Commission received notification of a proposed concentration pursuant to Article 4 of Council Regulation (EC) No 139/2004 ([1]).

This notification concerns the following undertakings:

— The British Broadcasting Corporation ('BBC', United Kingdom);

— ITV Network Limited ('ITV', United Kingdom);

— Channel 4 Television Corporation ('Channel 4', United Kingdom); and

— Freesat (UK) Limited ('Freesat', United Kingdom).

BBC, ITV and Channel 4 acquire within the meaning of Article 3(1)(b) and Article 3(4) of the Merger Regulation joint control of the whole of Freesat through Digital UK Trading Limited (United Kingdom).

The concentration is accomplished by way of purchase of shares.

2. The business activities of the undertakings concerned are:

— for BBC: public sector broadcaster providing a wide range of TV and radio channels as well as iPlayer and other on-demand services which are accessible to licence fee payers throughout the UK through a variety of platforms and devices.

— for ITV: integrated producer broadcaster, creates, owns and distributes high-quality content on multiple platforms globally. It broadcasts a large portfolio of commercial channels including the main ITV channel.

— for Channel 4: publicly-owned and commercially-funded UK public service broadcaster which operates a portfolio of channels accessible on a free to view basis via a variety of platforms and devices.

— for Freesat: joint venture between the BBC and ITV which provides a satellite broadcasting platform to c. 1,1 million homes (free to view linear TV and on demand content over satellite, as well as paid for on demand content). It also provides technical and consultancy support to a small number of international customers to whom it licences certain technology and knowhow associated with free to view TV services.

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.

Pursuant to the Commission Notice on a simplified procedure for treatment of certain concentrations under the Council Regulation (EC) No 139/2004 ([2]) it should be noted that this case is a candidate for treatment under the procedure set out in the Notice.

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. The following reference should always be specified:

M. 10187 – BBC/ITV/Channel 4/Freesat

([1]) OJ L 24, 29.1.2004, p. 1 (the 'Merger Regulation').
([2]) OJ C 366, 14.12.2013, p. 5.

Observations can be sent to the Commission by email, by fax, or by post. Please use the contact details below:

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