



Determination No. M/03/039 of the Competition Authority, dated 16 January 2004, under Section 21 of the Competition Act, 2002

Notification No. M/03/039 – Acquisition by 3i Group plc of HSS Hire Services Group plc.

Introduction

1. On 16 December 2003 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 3i Group PLC (“3i”) would acquire HSS Hire Services PLC (“HSS”).

The Parties

2. 3i is a venture capital company listed on the London Stock Exchange that has investments in, *inter alia*, software and IT services, healthcare and childcare, real estate, textiles, frozen foods, general retail, security, building materials, engineering and machinery.
3. HSS is a company, registered in England and Wales, that is involved in the hire of tools, equipment and small plant for construction and other commercial purposes such as hire of power, lighting, welding, powered access and cleaning equipment, and in the provision of associated repair and training services. HSS also offers an event hire services including the rental of tents, chairs, flooring and china for customers such as caterers, hoteliers and corporate hospitality organisers

Analysis

4. 3i does not carry on business in Ireland in the areas of tools and equipment hire nor event hire services. Jet-Vac Systems Limited (“Jet-Vac”), one of 3i’s portfolio companies, which operates and hires heavy industrial cleaning equipment, had a limited business presence in Ireland. In particular, Jet-Vac had contracts with Irish Steel, which has now ceased operations. Moreover, as far as we are aware, Jet-Vac currently has no plans to enter into new contracts in the Republic of Ireland. Therefore, there is no significant overlap in the parties’ activities.
5. Accordingly, the proposed transaction does not give rise to competition concerns.

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 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.



Determination of the Competition Authority

For the Competition Authority

**Edward Henneberry
Member of the Competition Authority**

16 January 2004