



DETERMINATION OF MERGER NOTIFICATION M/06/008 – Thomas Crosbie/Wexford Echo

Section 21 of the Competition Act 2002

Proposed acquisition by Thomas Crosbie Holdings Limited of Wexford Echo Newspaper Limited

Dated 21/03/06

Introduction

1. On 24th February 2006 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 Thomas Crosbie Holdings Limited (“TCH”) would acquire Wexford Echo Newspaper Limited (“the proposed acquisition”). The Authority forwarded a copy of the notification to the Minister and notified the undertakings involved that it considers the proposed acquisition to be a media merger, in accordance with section 23(1) of the Act.

The Undertakings Involved

2. TCH is a private limited company incorporated in the State. It is a holding company whose subsidiaries publish the following national and regional, daily and weekly newspapers: The Irish Examiner, The Evening Echo, The Western People, The Sligo Weekender, The Waterford News and Star, The Kingdom, The Newry Democrat, the Down Democrat, The Nationalist & Leinster Times, The Kildare Nationalist, The Laois Nationalist, The Roscommon Herald, The Irish Post and The Sunday business Post.
3. TCH also owns minority interests in County Mayo Radio Limited, NWR FM Limited and Red FM.
4. Wexford Echo Newspaper Limited (“Wexford Echo”) publishes the following weekly regional newspapers - The Enniscorthy Echo, The Wexford Echo, The Gorey Echo and The New Ross Echo. These have a circulation in County Wexford.

Analysis

5. TCH does not publish any weekly regional newspapers which compete either in terms of advertising or circulation with the publications of Wexford Echo. The transaction does not, therefore, 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 by Thomas Crosbie Holdings Limited of Wexford Echo Newspaper 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, subject to section 23(9)(a) of the Act.

For the Competition Authority

Dr. Paul K. Gorecki
Member of the Competition Authority