



**Determination No. M/03/020 of the Competition Authority, dated 15 July 2003, under Section 21 of the Competition Act, 2002**

**Notification No. M/03/020 – Acquisition by March UK Limited of ARG Equation Limited and a number of related companies.**

**Introduction**

1. On 18 June 2003 the Competition Authority, in accordance with Section 18 of the Competition Act, 2002 (“the Act”) was notified, on a mandatory basis, of a proposal whereby March U.K. Limited (March) would acquire ARG Equation Limited and a number of related companies (the UK Home Shopping Business) of GUS plc. The Authority, in accordance with s 23(1)(b) of the Act, notified the parties that it considers the transaction to be a media merger.

**The Parties**

2. March is a UK company ultimately controlled by Sir David Barclay and Sir Frederick Barclay who also ultimately control Littlewoods Limited (Littlewoods), a UK non-food retail business with interest in high street stores, catalogue stores, mail order catalogues and related businesses. Sir David Barclay and Sir Frederick Barclay also ultimately control the Scotsman Publications Limited, a Scottish newspaper business and The Business Publishing Limited which publishes a weekly business newspaper. There are a small amount of sales of those publications in the State.
3. The UK Home Shopping Business’s activities include home shopping catalogue services, retail, and related financial services in the UK. It formed part of the GUS retail group, a UK group with interests in retail, home shopping and financial services.

**Analysis**

4. There is no overlap between the parties’ activities within the State. March has home shopping activities on the island of Ireland, principally in Northern Ireland. Any sales into the State are insignificant cross-border sales. The UK Home Shopping Business does not operate any home shopping activities within the State.



## **Determination of the Competition Authority**

### **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.

**For the Competition Authority**

**Terry Calvani**  
**Member of the Competition Authority**  
**15 July 2003**