

The International Comparative Legal Guide to:

# **Merger Control 2016**

### **12th Edition**

A practical cross-border insight into merger control issues

#### Published by Global Legal Group, with contributions from:

Accura Advokatpartnerselskab Advokatfirmaet Wiersholm AS AlixPartners UK LLP Anastasios Antoniou LLC Ashurst LLP Asters Beiten Burkhardt Bergstein Abogados Blake, Cassels & Graydon LLP Boga & Associates Drew & Napier LLC ELIG, Attorneys-at-Law Erdinast, Ben Nathan & Co. Advocates GO Associados Ivanyan & Partners Jesse & Kalaus Attorneys JSC Center for Development and Protection of Competition Policy Karimov and Partners Ltd. Kastell Advokatbyrå AB Khan Corporate Law

King & Wood Mallesons Koep & Partners Lee and Li, Attorneys-at-Law Linklaters LLP Matthews Law Morais Leitão, Galvão Teles, Soares da Silva & Associados Moravčević Vojnović i Partneri in cooperation with Schoenherr Nagashima Ohno & Tsunematsu **OLIVARES** Peltonen LMR Attorneys Ltd. PUNUKA Attorneys & Solicitors Schellenberg Wittmer Ltd Schoenherr Schoenherr in cooperation with Advokatsko druzhestvo Stoyanov & Tsekova Schoenherr și Asociații SCA Sidley Austin LLP Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom **UGGC** Avocats Vaish Associates, Advocates



#### The International Comparative Legal Guide to: Merger Control 2016



#### **Global Legal Group**

**Contributing Editors** Nigel Parr and Catherine Hammon, Ashurst LLP

Head of Business Development Dror Levy

Sales Director Florjan Osmani

Account Directors Oliver Smith, Rory Smith

**Senior Account Manager** Maria Lopez

Sales Support Manager Toni Hayward

Sub Editor Hannah Yip

**Senior Editor** Suzie Levy

**Group Consulting Editor** Alan Falach

**Group Publisher** Richard Firth

#### Published by

Global Legal Group Ltd. 59 Tanner Street London SE1 3PL, UK Tel: +44 20 7367 0720 Fax: +44 20 7407 5255 Email: info@glgroup.co.uk URL: www.glgroup.co.uk

**GLG Cover Design** F&F Studio Design

#### **GLG Cover Image Source** iStockphoto

Printed by

Ashford Colour Press Ltd. November 2015

Copyright © 2015 Global Legal Group Ltd. All rights reserved No photocopying

ISBN 978-1-910083-70-3 ISSN 1745-347X

#### **Strategic Partners**





#### General Chapters:

1	fo Bid or Not to Bid, That is the Question – the Assessment of Bidding Markets in Merger Control –		
	David Wirth, Ashurst LLP	1	
2	Remedies Under the EUMR – Frederic Depoortere & Giorgio Motta,		
	Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom	10	
3	The Economics of Retailer Mergers – Ashley Burdett & Mat Hughes, AlixPartners UK LLP	15	

#### Country Question and Answer Chapters:

4	Albania	Boga & Associates: Sokol Elmazaj & Jonida Skendaj	23	
5	Australia	King & Wood Mallesons: Sharon Henrick & Wayne Leach		
6	Austria	Schoenherr: Stefanie Stegbauer & Franz Urlesberger		
7	Belgium	Linklaters LLP: Thomas Franchoo & Niels Baeten	39 46	
8	Bosnia & Herzegovina	Moravčević Vojnović i Partneri in cooperation with Schoenherr:		
Ũ	Dooma et Herzego ma	Srđana Petronijević & Danijel Stevanović	53	
9	Botswana	Khan Corporate Law: Shakila Khan & Precious N. Hadebe		
10	Brazil	GO Associados: Gesner Oliveira & Ricardo Pastore	67	
11	Bulgaria	Schoenherr in cooperation with Advokatsko druzhestvo Stoyanov & Tsekova Ilko Stoyanov & Mariya Papazova	a: 75	
12	Canada	Blake, Cassels & Graydon LLP: Debbie Salzberger & Emma Costante	82	
13	China	King & Wood Mallesons: Susan Ning & Ting Gong	91	
14	Cyprus	Anastasios Antoniou LLC: Anastasios A. Antoniou & Aquilina Demetriadi	98	
15	Denmark	Accura Advokatpartnerselskab: Jesper Fabricius & Christina Heiberg-Grevy	105	
16	Estonia	Jesse & Kalaus Attorneys: Tanel Kalaus & Mari Matjus	114	
17	European Union	Sidley Austin LLP: Steve Spinks	122	
18	Finland	Peltonen LMR Attorneys Ltd.: Ilkka Leppihalme & Matti J. Huhtamäki	133	
19	France	Ashurst LLP: Christophe Lemaire & Simon Naudin	144	
20	Germany	Beiten Burkhardt: Philipp Cotta & Uwe Wellmann	154	
21	Hong Kong	King & Wood Mallesons: Martyn Huckerby & Edmund Wan	164	
22	Hungary	Schoenherr: Anna Turi & Christoph Haid	170	
23	India	Vaish Associates, Advocates: Man Mohan Sharma	178	
24	Israel	Erdinast, Ben Nathan & Co. Advocates: Michal Rothschild	186	
25	Italy	King & Wood Mallesons: Riccardo Croce & Elisa Baretta		
26	Japan Nagashima Ohno & Tsunematsu: Eriko Watanabe & Yoshitosh		201	
27	Kazakhstan	JSC Center for Development and Protection of Competition Policy: Aldash Aitzhanov & Anara Batyrbayeva	208	
28	Kosovo	Boga & Associates: Sokol Elmazaj & Delvina Nallbani	215	
29	Macedonia	Moravčević Vojnović i Partneri in cooperation with Schoenherr: Srđana Petronijević & Danijel Stevanović	222	
30	Mexico	OLIVARES: Gustavo A. Alcocer & Andrés de la Cruz Pérez	230	
31	Montenegro	Moravčević Vojnović i Partneri in cooperation with Schoenherr: Srđana Petronijević & Danijel Stevanović	236	
32	Morocco	UGGC Avocats: Corinne Khayat & Catherine Chappellet-Rempp	243	
33	Namibia	Koep & Partners: Hugo Meyer van den Berg & Peter Frank Koep	253	
34	New Zealand	Matthews Law: Nicko Waymouth & Gus Stewart	260	
35	Nigeria	PUNUKA Attorneys & Solicitors: Anthony I. Idigbe & Eberechi Ifeonu	267	
36	Norway	Advokatfirmaet Wiersholm AS: Anders Ryssdal & Håkon Cosma Størdal	277	
37	Portugal	Morais Leitão, Galvão Teles, Soares da Silva & Associados: Carlos Botelho Moniz & Pedro de Gouveia e Melo	285	
38	Romania	Schoenherr și Asociații SCA: Cătălin Suliman & Silviu Vasile	296	
39	Russia	Ivanyan & Partners: Maria Miroshnikova & Sergei Kushnarenko	304	

Continued Overleaf

#### Further copies of this book and others in the series can be ordered from the publisher. Please call +44 20 7367 0720

#### Disclaimer

This publication is for general information purposes only. It does not purport to provide comprehensive full legal or other advice. Global Legal Group Ltd. and the contributors accept no responsibility for losses that may arise from reliance upon information contained in this publication. This publication is intended to give an indication of legal issues upon which you may need advice. Full legal advice should be taken from a qualified professional when dealing with specific situations.

#### The International Comparative Legal Guide to: Merger Control 2016

	Country Question and Answer Chapters:				
GLG	40 Serbia	Moravčević Vojnović i Partneri in cooperation with Schoenherr: Srđana Petronijević & Danijel Stevanović	312		
Global Legal Group	41 Singapore	Drew & Napier LLC: Lim Chong Kin & Dr. Corinne Chew	321		
Global Legal Gloup	42 Slovakia	Schoenherr: Jitka Linhartová & Claudia Bock	331		
	43 Slovenia	Schoenherr: Eva Škufca & Christoph Haid	337		
	44 Spain	King & Wood Mallesons: Ramón García-Gallardo & Manuel Bermúdez Caballero	347		
	45 Sweden	Kastell Advokatbyrå AB: Pamela Hansson & Christina Mailund	358		
	46 Switzerland	Schellenberg Wittmer Ltd: David Mamane & Dr. Jürg Borer	366		
	47 Taiwan	Lee and Li, Attorneys-at-Law: Stephen Wu & Yvonne Hsieh	374		
	48 Turkey	ELIG, Attorneys-at-Law: Gönenç Gürkaynak & Ayşe Güner	381		
	49 Ukraine	Asters: Igor Svechkar & Tetiana Vovk	388		
	50 United Kingdom	Ashurst LLP: Nigel Parr & Duncan Liddell	395		
	51 USA	Sidley Austin LLP: William Blumenthal & Marc E. Raven	409		
	52 Uruguay	Bergstein Abogados: Leonardo Melos & Jonás Bergstein	417		
	53 Uzbekistan	Karimov and Partners Ltd.: Bobir Karimov	424		

#### EDITORIAL

Welcome to the twelfth edition of *The International Comparative Legal Guide* to: Merger Control.

This guide provides corporate counsel and international practitioners with a comprehensive worldwide legal analysis of the laws and regulations of merger control.

It is divided into two main sections:

Three general chapters. These chapters are designed to provide readers with a comprehensive overview of key issues affecting merger control, particularly from the perspective of a multi-jurisdictional transaction.

Country question and answer chapters. These provide a broad overview of common issues in merger control laws and regulations in 50 jurisdictions.

All chapters are written by leading merger control lawyers and industry specialists and we are extremely grateful for their excellent contributions.

Special thanks are reserved for the contributing editors Nigel Parr and Catherine Hammon of Ashurst LLP for their invaluable assistance.

Global Legal Group hopes that you find this guide practical and interesting.

The International Comparative Legal Guide series is also available online at www.iclg.co.uk.

Alan Falach LL.M. Group Consulting Editor Global Legal Group Alan.Falach@glgroup.co.uk

# Kosovo

#### Boga & Associates

#### Relevant Authorities and Legislation

#### 1.1 Who is/are the relevant merger authority(ies)?

The merger authority in Kosovo is the Competition Authority (hereinafter referred to as the "CA") which is managed by the Kosovo Competition Commission, a collegial organ composed of five (5) members.

CA is a legal person having public authority, independent in performing its duties set out in the Competition Law (no. 03/L-229 as amended by Law no. 04/L-226, hereinafter referred to as the "Competition Law") and Law no. 04/L-024 "On state aid".

Pursuant to the provisions of the Competition Law, the President, Vice President and members of the Kosovo Competition Commission are proposed by the Government and appointed by the Assembly. It should be noted that the mandate of the Kosovo Competition Commission members expired over a year ago, and is not currently functional.

The Kosovo Competition Commission has the responsibility and authority to enforce the law and promote competition among entrepreneurs and protect consumers in Kosovo.

#### 1.2 What is the merger legislation?

Mergers in the Republic of Kosovo are governed by the Competition Law and several administrative acts for the implementation of the Competition Law, such as:

- Administrative Instruction no. 04/2012 "On the form and content of legitimacy".
- Administrative Instruction no. 05/2012 "On criteria and terms for determining agreements of minor importance".
- Administrative Instruction no. 06/2012 "On forms for submitting requests and criteria for determining the concentration of enterprises".
- Administrative Instruction no. 07/2012 "On criteria to reduce or release administrative measures".

### 1.3 Is there any other relevant legislation for foreign mergers?

Kosovo legislation does not provide specific guidelines which would exempt foreign mergers. The merger control rules apply to foreign mergers when the jurisdictional thresholds are met (see question 2.6 below).

### 1.4 Is there any other relevant legislation for mergers in particular sectors?

The Competition Law does not provide for different thresholds for specific sectors. In addition to Competition Law provisions that are applicable to all undertakings, mergers in some sectors are conditioned by prior notifications or approvals, (i.e. mergers in the banking and insurance sector, energy sector, or telecommunications sector). When such mergers are to take place, notification or approvals should be made to or obtained by the relevant authorities, such as the Central Bank of Kosovo, the Energy Regulatory Office, or the Regulatory Authority of Electronic and Postal Communications.

#### 2 Transactions Caught by Merger Control Legislation

### 2.1 Which types of transaction are caught – in particular, how is the concept of "control" defined?

Pursuant to the provisions of the Competition Law, the types of transaction that are caught by merger control legislation are those that result in a concentration of enterprises. A concentration is created by establishing control through: (i) the merger of two or more independent enterprises or parts of these enterprises; and (ii) the acquisition of direct or indirect control, or influence over the activities of one or more enterprises or parts of enterprises by: (a) taking over the majority of shares or a part of them; (b) taking over the majority of voting rights; or (c) in any other way envisioned by the laws in force and other regulations.

Control is defined as the acquisition of rights, contracts or other acts through which one or more enterprises, either individually or together, taking into consideration all legal and factual circumstances, acquire the ability to achieve decisive influence over the activities of an enterprise.

### 2.2 Can the acquisition of a minority shareholding amount to a "merger"?

In order to amount to a merger, the acquisition of a minority shareholding should result in the acquisition of direct or indirect control over the target. An undertaking is deemed to have control over the target when it can exercise decisive influence over the target's activities.

#### ICLG TO: MERGER CONTROL 2016

 $\ensuremath{\mathbb{C}}$  Published and reproduced with kind permission by Global Legal Group Ltd, London



Sokol Elmazaj

Delvina Nallbani

In case the acquired minority shareholding does not grant any control over the target, it would not amount to a "merger" and no filing would be required.

#### 2.3 Are joint ventures subject to merger control?

Joint ventures are subject to merger control in so far as they result from the merger of one or more independent enterprises and function as an independent economic subject.

### 2.4 What are the jurisdictional thresholds for application of merger control?

A concentration of enterprises is subject to the clearance and approval of the CA if the following jurisdictional thresholds are met:

- i. the aggregate income of all the participating undertakings in the international market exceeds twenty (20) million Euros, based on financial reports of the financial year preceding the year of the concentration, and if at least one of the participating undertakings is located in the Republic of Kosovo; and
- the general income in the Kosovo domestic market of at least two (2) of the participating undertakings exceeds three (3) million Euros based on financial reports preceding the year of the concentration.

The Competition Law does not clearly specify the methodology for calculating the turnover of the participating undertakings for purposes of this jurisdictional threshold. It only provides that income from the sale of goods or services made between undertakings that are part of a group are not taken into consideration in the calculation of the total annual turnover. If, at the time of the notification, the financial statement for the preceding year is not available, the relevant turnover will be the one achieved in the year for which the last financial statement has been prepared.

Article 66 of the Competition Law provides that the law shall be implemented in pursuance to the Directives of the EU on competition. It may be assumed that the CA will refer to the EU laws if Kosovo Competition Law lacks clarity.

### 2.5 Does merger control apply in the absence of a substantive overlap?

The Competition Law does not provide whether merger control applies also in the absence of a substantive overlap. However, it may be inferred that, provided the jurisdictional thresholds are met, participants must notify the CA, even when the merger appears to not raise any competition concerns.

#### 2.6 In what circumstances is it likely that transactions between parties outside Kosovo ("foreign-to-foreign" transactions) would be caught by your merger control legislation?

Article 2 of the Competition Law provides that the said law shall apply to any restriction of the competition in the territory of the Republic of Kosovo or outside this territory if these actions present their effects in Kosovo. In this regard, foreign-to-foreign mergers become subject to Kosovo merger control rules when the jurisdictional thresholds are met and when such acts have an effect in Kosovo in order to trigger a filing obligation.

However, article 15 of the Competition Law provides that the undertakings participating to a merger/concentration are obliged to

notify the concentration if the notification thresholds are met. One of the requirements for the notification threshold is that at least one of the participating undertakings has the registered office in Kosovo, which could mean that a foreign-to-foreign transaction would not be caught by the Competition Law.

The CA is yet to adopt new secondary legislation which may address this issue as well.

## 2.7 Please describe any mechanisms whereby the operation of the jurisdictional thresholds may be overridden by other provisions.

See question 1.4 above.

#### 2.8 Where a merger takes place in stages, what principles are applied in order to identify whether the various stages constitute a single transaction or a series of transactions?

The provisions of the Competition Law imply that the notification obligation is triggered at the moment of the acquisition of the shares that allows the acquirer to exercise decisive influence over the target's business activities, thus when the acquirer has established control over the target.

Furthermore, pursuant to the provisions of the Competition Law, two or more agreements (concentrations) between the same undertakings carried out within a period of two years will be deemed as one concentration, when meeting the threshold criteria.

#### 3 Notification and its Impact on the Transaction Timetable

## 3.1 Where the jurisdictional thresholds are met, is notification compulsory and is there a deadline for notification?

The notification of a merger is compulsory where the jurisdictional thresholds are met. The Competition Law and the relevant administrative instructions specify that the notification must be filed with the CA after the parties have entered into an agreement and once they make the prospective transaction public. However, the filing may be made prior to the implementation of the transaction. In this case, the parties may also submit a merger notification before concluding a contract by submitting with the notification a signed letter of intent.

## 3.2 Please describe any exceptions where, even though the jurisdictional thresholds are met, clearance is not required.

- (i) Purchase of the shares of an enterprise by financial institutions, loan and insurance institutions, resale, for as long as they do not practice the right to vote for the shares they own and under the condition that their resale takes place within 12 months of the purchase;
- purchase of shares or parts of shares as a result of enterprise internal restructuration and related to joint-control takeover, merging, and transfer of property; or
- (iii) when the control over the enterprise is transferred to the bankruptcy manager or the liquidator in compliance with the provisions of laws in force.

## 3.3 Where a merger technically requires notification and clearance, what are the risks of not filing? Are there any formal sanctions?

Failure to follow the merger notification requirements or entering incorrect or false information in the concentration assessment procedure submitted to the CA, shall result in a fine amounting to 2% of the total annual turnover for which the last financial statements have been prepared.

If an implemented concentration adversely affects competition on the market and creates or strengthens a dominant position, it could be subject to a fine of up to 10% of the total annual turnover for which the last financial statements have been prepared. In addition, the CA may take measures to unwind the implemented concentration.

In addition, for the above-mentioned violations, the responsible person of the company shall be subject to fines in the amount of one thousand (1,000) up to three thousand (3,000) Euros.

### 3.4 Is it possible to carve out local completion of a merger to avoid delaying global completion?

The Competition Law and the administrative instructions issued for its implementation do not provide for the carving out of local completion.

### 3.5 At what stage in the transaction timetable can the notification be filed?

The notification is filed with the CA for assessment upon concluding a contract which results in acquiring control over an enterprise or part of enterprise and after public disclosure of the transaction, but prior to its implementation.

The participants of a merger may submit a notification on the objective of the concentration prior to signing the contract and prior to announcing the concentration publicly, if they respectively certify that there are real expectations that the agreement will be entered into or that the public announcement of the concentration will take place.

# 3.6 What is the timeframe for scrutiny of the merger by the merger authority? What are the main stages in the regulatory process? Can the timeframe be suspended by the authority?

Upon receiving notification of a potential concentration, the CA commences the process of merger control. The CA has 30 days to render a decision clearing the merger or not clearing the merger based on the documents filed by the applicant. The CA issues a certificate of completeness to confirm that a notification has been properly submitted.

The issuance of the certificate triggers a 30-day period, within which the CA may issue a conclusion to initiate further investigation proceedings when it finds that the proposed concentration may adversely affect competition on the market, or create or strengthen an existing dominant position. If no decision is issued within the 30-day period, the concentration will be deemed cleared and the applicant is entitled to request written confirmation on the clearance from the CA.

If the CA issues a decision calling for further investigation proceedings, it may enter into such proceedings for an additional 90-day period. Upon conclusion of the investigation, the CA will

issue a decision on whether to: (i) approve the concentration; (ii) approve the concentration with conditions and obligations; or (iii) prohibit the concentration.

#### 3.7 Is there any prohibition on completing the transaction before clearance is received or any compulsory waiting period has ended? What are the risks in completing before clearance is received?

A concentration of enterprises which may significantly damage competition, especially when such concentration results in strengthening a current dominant position or creating a new dominant position, should be notified and cleared with the CA.

If a concentration which adversely affects competition on the market or creates or strengthens a dominant position is implemented without clearance, the undertaking could be subject to a fine of up to 10% of the total annual turnover for which the last financial statements have been prepared, whereas the responsible person of the undertaking shall be fined in the amount of from one thousand (1,000) up to three thousand (3,000) Euros. In addition, the CA may take measures to unwind the implemented concentration.

### 3.8 Where notification is required, is there a prescribed format?

The CA has not yet published a standard notification form. However, the required information that should be included in the notification form is set out in the administrative instruction no. 06/2012. Specifically, the notification should contain the following information:

- signature or name, place and type of activity of the applicant;
- signature or name, place and type of activity of all parties to the concentration;
- name and authority of the agent or representative who submits the application as representative of the applicant;
- name, address, telephone number, fax number and email address of the person that the applicant has appointed as the person responsible for contacts and cooperation with the CA, if this person is different from the person who submitted the request;
- detailed description of the legal form of the concentration;
- legal basis for the concentration (document name, business number, address or name of the parties in legal concrete works, place and date of the legal affairs) such as: (i) the concentration agreement; (ii) the attachment agreement or relevant decision of the enterprise body; (iii) the agreement on acquiring shares or parts of the company; (iv) the management agreement; (v) the profit transfer agreement; (vi) the decision to amend the status, social arrangements or any other act by which a participant gives a decisive influence; (vii) the agreement on lease property through which any of participants is given decisive influence; (viii) public offerings; or (ix) agreement for joint investment;
- annual financial statement for the previous year and other reports in which the financial condition of the participants who submitted the request is clearly shown;
- total annual operating revenues of the participants to the concentration, after deduction of VAT and other taxes directly related to trade and discounts submitted separately for each of the concentration participants in (i) the international market, and (ii) the Kosovan market;
- relevant markets in which the parties in the concentration operate and the enterprises under their control or companies that control them and an evaluation of their market shares before and after the implementation of the concentration;

- listing and evaluation of market shares, profit, and the main competitors of the participants in the concentration agreement in the relevant market;
- structure of the holders of shares or parts of the company which acquires control or dominant influence before and after implementation of the concentration (expressed in a percentage);
- list of other enterprises in the relevant market in which the parties in the concentration individually or together have 10% or more of the capital shares or 10% or more of the voting rights with a brief description of the main activities of the enterprises;
- list of all the enterprises in the relevant market in which members of the board of directors or supervisory board members of either party in the concentration are also members of the management board or supervisory board, with a brief description of the important activities of those enterprises;
- references to other authorities competent to examine the concentration outside the territory of Kosovo where the parties have introduced a request for consideration of the concentration or aim to introduce such a request;
- detailed descriptions of the structure of distribution and sales of retail products or services in the relevant market;
- description of the investments and research conducted or intended to be realised in the development of the concentration agreement by each participant (form and type of investment or research, their importance in the production, supply of goods and/or services in the relevant market, the amount of funds that were invested, or that will be invested);
- legal and economic reasons for the concentration agreement;
- description and a detailed explanation of the expected benefits that will arise from the implementation of the concentration in terms of the consumers' interests particularly:
  - i. reduction in the price of products and/or services;
  - ii. increase in product quality and/or services;
  - iii. introduction of innovations (inventions); and
  - iv. growth and expansion of opportunities for the product selection and/or services to consumers;
- signature of the person responsible for the accuracy of the data in the request; and
- place and date of delivery.

Besides the above-listed information, the CA may require additional data if it is considered necessary for the assessment of the concentration.

## 3.9 Is there a short form or accelerated procedure for any types of mergers? Are there any informal ways in which the clearance timetable can be speeded up?

A merger notification can be submitted in a "short form" when:

- the participants to the concentration are not active in the same geographic and product market and when there is no horizontal agreement between them;
- the participants do not operate on markets which affect each other and there is no vertical agreement between them;
- the participants to the concentration operate in the same relevant market but their joint market share does not exceed 15%, or if the participants operate on markets which affect each other but their market shares do not exceed 25%; and
- in case of a transfer from joint to sole control, or when two or more undertakings, which do not have significant activities in Kosovo, take control of a joint venture, or when such activities are not foreseen within a reasonable time period.

Please see question 3.6 above for further details on the timeframe process.

The informal way in which the clearance timetable can be sped up is by submitting all the required documents on time.

### 3.10 Who is responsible for making the notification and are there any filing fees?

Whenever an enterprise takes over control or gains a decisive influence over another enterprise or part of another enterprise, the notification of the concentration is made by the enterprise that takes over control. In other cases, all the participants of concentration submit the notification in accordance with their joint agreement.

Pursuant to the administrative instruction no. 06/2012, a fee of one hundred (100) Euros applies to the notification filing and a fee of three thousand (3,000) Euros applies for obtaining clearance of the concentration.

#### 3.11 What impact, if any, do rules governing a public offer for a listed business have on the merger control clearance process in such cases?

The Competition Law does not provide for any specific regulation for the treatment of mergers in cases of listed businesses. In these cases the general rules are applicable.

#### 3.12 Will the notification be published?

Upon receiving a merger notification, the CA publishes on its website a public notice for all interested parties. The notice contains the type of activities performed by the participants in Kosovo, the effects of the concentration on the market and an invitation to all the parties that have specific knowledge of the relevant market to provide their comments, positions and opinions concerning the possible effects the concentration may have on their activities.

The submitted notification will not be published; however, the decision taken by the CA on the concentration will be published.

#### 4 Substantive Assessment of the Merger and Outcome of the Process

### 4.1 What is the substantive test against which a merger will be assessed?

The substantive test against which a merger will be assessed from the CA is the considerable restriction of the competition in the market.

Upon its assessment on whether to allow the concentration, the CA shall confirm (i) its effect in the market competition and possible obstacles to entering the market (especially when the concentration creates a new dominant position or strengthens an existing dominant position), (ii) the structure of the relevant market and any existing or possible future competitors, (iii) the structure and selection of the market offer and demand, (iv) the position, market participation and economic and financial power of the enterprise in the relevant market, and (v) the level of competitive capability of the participants in the concentration, etc.

### 4.2 To what extent are efficiency considerations taken into account?

The CA may take into consideration the economic efficiency if the concentration results in the:

- reduction of production or distribution costs, improvement of efficiency, improvement of products or production processes, encouragement of research for the development and dissemination of technical or professional knowledge, rational exploitation of resources or encouragement of the development of small and medium enterprises;
- more direct participation of consumers or users in these advantages; and
- no significant limitations to competition.

### 4.3 Are non-competition issues taken into account in assessing the merger?

The Competition Law is silent in this regard and there is no practice to indicate whether the CA would take into account non-competition issues when assessing a merger.

#### 4.4 What is the scope for the involvement of third parties (or complainants) in the regulatory scrutiny process?

Upon receiving the notification on the objective to execute a concentration, the CA publishes on its website a public notice for all interested third parties to submit their written remarks on the opinions for the execution of the concentration, so that the gathered information provides a better assessment of the situation in the relevant market. The deadline for the submission of such remarks is 15 days after the publication of the notice.

#### 4.5 What information gathering powers does the regulator enjoy in relation to the scrutiny of a merger?

Following the request of the CA, the competent court may grant to the CA various powers relating to the process of gathering the documents once an investigative procedure has been initiated.

Such powers consist in: (i) entering and performing inspections on all business premises, open depots and means of transportation at the residence of the enterprises against which the procedure is being carried out, as well as at any other address where the enterprise operates; (ii) checking company books and other documents related to the operation of the enterprise; and (iii) obtaining and/or copying company books and other documents or excerpts from company books and other documents, in electronic form or otherwise, etc.

## 4.6 During the regulatory process, what provision is there for the protection of commercially sensitive information?

During an unannounced inspection, letters, notes and other forms of communications which are considered secret information are excluded from the documentation which is being inspected.

Moreover, the employees of the CA are obliged to keep trade secrets even after five years from the termination of the employment contract with the Competition Authority.

When assessing whether certain information presents a trade secret, the CA shall take into consideration: (i) possession of such information outside of the enterprise; (ii) measures taken by the enterprise itself to protect the confidentiality of such information, in particular, the clause on the prohibition of non-competitiveness or on prohibition of publication of information included in employment contracts and the like; and (iii) the value of such information to the enterprise and its competitors.

#### 5 The End of the Process: Remedies, Appeals and Enforcement

#### 5.1 How does the regulatory process end?

The CA may make the decision to: (i) approve the concentration; (ii) approve the concentration with conditions and obligations; or (iii) prohibit the concentration.

## 5.2 Where competition problems are identified, is it possible to negotiate "remedies" which are acceptable to the parties?

Concentrations presenting certain competition problems may be cleared in accordance with certain conditions. In such cases, the CA notifies the enterprise that has submitted the notification, no later than 30 days from the date of receiving the notification, and proposes the appropriate measures for monitoring the business, and/or structural measures and conditions that should eliminate the negative effects of the concentration.

The appropriate remedies may be submitted pre-emptively by the enterprise that has submitted the notification, or they may be included in the notification on the objective for execution of concentration.

If the CA does not accept or only partially accepts the remedies proposed by the participants to the concentration, it is authorised to specify other measures including but not limited to the monitoring of activities.

### 5.3 To what extent have remedies been imposed in foreign-to-foreign mergers?

Foreign-to-foreign mergers are examined by the CA when the criteria provided in the Competition Law are met. However, there are no guidelines which would exempt certain foreign mergers or provide remedies in such a case.

## 5.4 At what stage in the process can the negotiation of remedies be commenced? Please describe any relevant procedural steps and deadlines.

See question 5.2 above.

#### 5.5 If a divestment remedy is required, does the merger authority have a standard approach to the terms and conditions to be applied to the divestment?

The Competition Law does not have any provisions regarding divestment remedies and the practice is yet to be developed.

### 5.6 Can the parties complete the merger before the remedies have been complied with?

The parties may not complete the merger before the remedies have

Kosovo

been complied with. The CA may allow the execution of specific actions when deemed necessary. However, this practice remains to be tested.

#### 5.7 How are any negotiated remedies enforced?

The law is silent on this specific point. However the general punitive measures and fines that relate to the implementation of a concentration that has not received clearance would apply.

#### 5.8 Will a clearance decision cover ancillary restrictions?

The Competition Law does not have any provisions specifying ancillary restrictions. Nevertheless, restrictions that are directly related and necessary to the implementation of the merger will be covered by the decision clearing the merger if they are mentioned in the notification.

#### 5.9 Can a decision on merger clearance be appealed?

A decision of the CA may not be appealed, but an administrative conflict may be initiated by filing a lawsuit at the competent court for administrative matters in Kosovo.

#### 5.10 What is the time limit for any appeal?

The party may initiate an administrative conflict within a period of 30 days from the issuance of the decision by the CA.

### 5.11 Is there a time limit for enforcement of merger control legislation?

The CA cannot initiate a fining procedure or determine fines after the five-year period from the date of the breach of the Competition Law. The statute of limitations starts from the date when the enterprise has received in a regular manner the final court decision, or from the day of reception of the binding decision made by the CA, if the party did not submit an appeal against that decision.

The above-mentioned statute of limitations is discontinued by any action undertaken from the competent bodies applying punitive measures. After each discontinuation, the statute of limitation starts running again, but the procedure of applying punitive measure cannot be extended beyond a total period of 10 years.

#### 6 Miscellaneous

### 6.1 To what extent does the merger authority in Kosovo liaise with those in other jurisdictions?

The Law on the Protection of Competition stipulates that its implementation should be in conformity with European Union Directives on competition.

The CA has signed a memorandum of cooperation with the competition authorities of Albania and Macedonia and there is a willingness to cooperate with other countries in this regard.

Furthermore, the CA is a member of the International Competition Network.

### 6.2 Are there any proposals for reform of the merger control regime in Kosovo?

The latest developments have been adopted through amendments to the Competition Law dated 13 February 2014.

The CA has not made public the intention to reform the merger control regime in Kosovo.

### 6.3 Please identify the date as at which your answers are up to date.

Our answers are up to date as of August 2015.



Sokol Elmazaj Boga & Associates

Nene Tereza Str. Entry 30 No.5, Pristina Kosovo

Tel: +381 38 223 152 Email: selmazi@bogalaw.com URL: www.bogalaw.com

Sokol joined Boga & Associates in 1996.

He is a partner of the firm and Country Manager for Kosovo.

He has extensive expertise in corporate, mergers and acquisitions, project financing, privatisation, real estate projects, energy, telecommunication and dispute resolution. He is continuously involved in providing legal advice to numerous project financing transactions mainly on concessions and privatisations with a focus on energy and infrastructure, both in Albania and Kosovo.

Sokol also conducted a broad range of legal due diligences for international clients considering investing in Albania or Kosovo in the fields of industry, telecommunications, banking, real estate, etc.

He is an authorised trademark attorney and has expertise in trademark filing strategies and trademark prosecution, including IP and litigation issues.

Sokol is continuously ranked as a Leading Lawyer in the well-known guides Chambers Global, Chambers & Partners and IFLR1000.

Sokol graduated in Law at the University of Tirana in 1996 and is admitted to practice in Albania. He is also an arbiter listed in the roster of the "American Chamber of Commerce of Kosovo".

Sokol is fluent in English and Italian.



#### Delvina Nallbani

Boga & Associates Nene Tereza Str. Entry 30 No.5, Pristina Kosovo

Tel: +381 38 223 152 Email: dnallbani@bogalaw.com URL: www.bogalaw.com

Delvina is an Associate at Boga & Associates, which she joined in 2012.

Her practice is mainly focused on providing legal advice to clients on a wide range of corporate, business and banking matters. She also provides assistance in advising investors on a number of transactions, including mergers and acquisitions, and privatisations.

Delvina graduated in Law at the University of Zagreb, and passed the Bar  $\operatorname{exam}$  in Kosovo.

She is fluent in Croatian and English.

### **BOGA & ASSOCIATES**

LEGAL • TAX • ACCOUNTING

Boga & Associates, established in 1994, has emerged as one of the premier law firms in Albania, earning a reputation for providing the highest quality legal, tax and accounting services to its clients. The firm also operates in Kosovo (Pristina), offering a full range of services. Until May 2007, the firm was a member firm of KPMG International and the Senior Partner/Managing Partner, Mr. Genc Boga, was also Senior Partner/Managing Partner of KPMG Albania.

The firm's particularity is linked to the multidisciplinary services it provides to its clients. Apart from the widely consolidated legal practice, the firm also offers significant expertise in tax and accounting services, with a keen sensitivity to the rapid changes in the Albanian and Kosovo business environment.

With its diverse capabilities and experience, the firm services leading clients in most major industries, banks and financial institutions, as well as companies engaged in insurance, construction, energy and utilities, entertainment and media, mining, oil and gas, professional services, real estate, technology, telecommunications, tourism, transport, infrastructure and consumer goods. The firm also has an outstanding litigation practice, representing clients at all levels of the Albanian courts. This same know-how and experience has been drawn upon by the Legislature in the drafting of new laws and regulations.

The firm is continuously ranked by Chambers and Partners as a "top tier firm" for Corporate/Commercial, Dispute Resolution, Projects, Intellectual Property and Real Estate, as well as by IFLR for Financial and Corporate Law. The firm is praised by clients and peers as a "law firm with high-calibre expertise", being distinguished "among the elite in Albania" and described as "accessible, responsive and wise".

### Current titles in the ICLG series include:

- Alternative Investment Funds
- Aviation Law
- Business Crime
- Cartels & Leniency
- Class & Group Actions
- Competition Litigation
- Construction & Engineering Law
- Copyright
- Corporate Governance
- Corporate Immigration
- Corporate Recovery & Insolvency
- Corporate Tax
- Data Protection
- Employment & Labour Law
- Enforcement of Foreign Judgments
- Environment & Climate Change Law
- Franchise
- Gambling
- Insurance & Reinsurance

- International Arbitration
- Lending & Secured Finance
- Litigation & Dispute Resolution
- Merger Control
- Mergers & Acquisitions
- Mining Law
- Oil & Gas Regulation
- Patents
- Pharmaceutical Advertising
- Private Client
- Private Equity
- Product Liability
- Project Finance
- Public Procurement
- Real Estate
- Securitisation
- Shipping Law
- Telecoms, Media & Internet
- Trade Marks



59 Tanner Street, London SE1 3PL, United Kingdom Tel: +44 20 7367 0720 / Fax: +44 20 7407 5255 Email: sales@glgroup.co.uk

#### www.iclg.co.uk