

Extending the duration of professional football broadcasting rights to five years: The *Autorité de la concurrence* publishes its opinion

Published on September 14, 2023

The *Autorité de la concurrence* has been referred to by the Minister of the Economy, Finance and Industrial and Digital Sovereignty to issue an opinion on a draft decree aimed at extending from four to five years the maximum duration of contracts concluded for the marketing of the audiovisual broadcasting rights mentioned in Article R. 333-3 of the French Sports Code (*Code du sport*).

According to the authors of the text, this extension is likely to foster the entry of new operators on the market for the acquisition of League 1 rights, stimulate competition for purchases and increase revenues for the LFP through higher prices, to the benefit of the entire football ecosystem.

While the *Autorité's* investigation was unable to confirm the effectiveness of the proposed measure with regard to its objective, it did not highlight any decisive risk of harm to market structure (foreclosure of broadcasters) or consumer welfare (increase in subscription prices). In principle, therefore, the draft decree does not give rise to any major reservations.

However, the *Autorité* points out that Article R. 333-3 of the French Sports Code (*Code du sport*) provides a comprehensive framework for the marketing of League 1 audiovisual broadcasting rights. In these circumstances, the *Autorité* considers that by amending just one of these provisions, without more broadly considering the impact of such a modification on the operation of the system as a whole, the balance sought by Article R. 333-3 may be called into question.

The *Autorité* invites the Government to initiate a more global reflection on the framework set out in Article R. 333-3. If the government commits to this course of action, the *Autorité* will need to be in a position to carry out an in-depth analysis of the sector, which will require more information (more detailed impact study, regulatory review, data, etc.) than that provided in the context of this request for an opinion.

PRESS RELEASE OF 14 SEPTEMBER

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