



Determination No. M/05/021 of the Competition Authority, 2 June 2005, under Section 21 of the Competition Act, 2002.

Notification No. M/05/021 – William Hill/Stanley Racing

Introduction

1. On the 16th of May 2005 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 William Hill Organization Limited (“William Hill”) would acquire sole control of Stanley Racing (Ireland) Limited (“Stanley Ireland”).

The Parties

2. William Hill, the acquirer, is listed on the London Stock Exchange and provides bookmaking services through 1,613 Licensed Bookmaking Offices (“LBOs”) in the UK, an on-course betting business operating in the UK and Internet and telephone betting businesses which take bets from both UK and non-UK punters.
3. William Hill has neither LBOs nor on-course betting services in the State or in Northern Ireland. William Hill has Internet and telephone customers in the State which generated punter turnover of [less than £10 million and less than £2 million] respectively.
4. Stanley Ireland is a wholly owned subsidiary of Stanley Leisure plc (“Stanley Leisure”), which is a listed company on the London Stock Exchange. Stanley Leisure has over 560 LBOs in the UK (including 37 in Northern Ireland) trading under the “Stanley Racing” and “Stanley Bet” brands. Stanley Ireland has 52 LBOs, which trade under the name Stanley Bet, in the State.
5. Stanley Leisure also has an Internet bookmaking business, a telephone bookmaking business and an Internet casino, but these assets are not included in the sale to William Hill.



Analysis

6. As discussed above, William Hill does not own or operate any LBOs in the State. The parties overlap in the provision of Internet and telephone betting services. However, Stanley Leisure's Internet and telephone bookmaking divisions do not form part of the transaction. Furthermore, the Sale and Purchase Agreement excludes "*on-line betting*" and "*tele-betting*" from the scope of the non-compete restriction. William Hill and Stanley Leisure will continue to compete against one another in the provision of Internet and telephone bookmaking. As such, the proposed acquisition would not substantially lessen competition in any market for goods or services in the State.

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 William Hill Organization Limited of Stanley Racing (Ireland) 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.

For the Competition Authority

Edward Henneberry
Member of the Competition Authority

2 June 2005