

Anticipated acquisition by Top Online Partners Group Limited of Maple Syrup Group Limited and its subsidiaries

Notice of cancellation of terms of reference

1. On 16 January 2019, a reference was made by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) to its Chair for the constitution of a Group of CMA Panel Members under section 33 of the Enterprise Act 2002 (the Act) in respect of arrangements in progress or in contemplation which, if carried into effect, would have resulted in Maple Syrup Group Limited ceasing to be distinct from enterprises carried on by Top Online Partners Group Limited.
2. Further to the terms of reference, and in accordance with section 36(1) of the Act, the Inquiry Group was required to decide:
 - (a) whether arrangements were in progress or in contemplation which, if carried into effect, would have resulted in the creation of a relevant merger situation; and
 - (b) if so, whether the creation of that situation may have been expected to result in a substantial lessening of competition within any market or markets in the UK for goods or services.
3. On 17 January 2019, the CMA published a notice that it had received a request from Top Online Partners Group Limited under section 39(8A) of the Act, as a result of which the statutory deadline for publication of the CMA's report on the reference was extended by three weeks.
4. The CMA has received written assurances from Top Online Partners Group Limited and Maple Syrup Group Limited, that the arrangements in question have been abandoned.
5. The CMA, having had regard to those assurances, is satisfied that both Top Online Partners Group Limited and Maple Syrup Group Limited have, within the terms of section 37(1) of the Act, abandoned the proposal to make arrangements of the kind mentioned in the reference and has consequently cancelled the reference.

6. This cancellation is published in accordance with requirements laid down by sections 107(2)(a) and 107(4) of the Act.

Kirstin Baker

Inquiry Chair

21 March 2019