

Brussels, 22.08.2017

Dear Petitioners,

Thank you for your emails, postcards, letters and tweets expressing your concerns about the proposed acquisition of Monsanto by Bayer in the agro-industry.

Many of you warn about potential negative effects linked to Monsanto's and Bayer's products, including risks for human health, food safety, consumer protection, the environment and the climate. It goes without saying that Bayer and Monsanto have been - and will continue to be - bound by the strict rules we have in place to address all these issues. While these concerns are of great importance they do not form the basis for a merger assessment.

The basis of a merger assessment is formed around what many of you also raise: concerns about potential negative effects of the merger on consumers and farmers through decreased competition, increased prices, less choice and less innovation as well as increased dependence on few global suppliers.

Together with my services, I am carefully investigating the merger which was notified under the European merger regulation on 30 June 2017. Our mandate is to assess the merger from a competition perspective: We assess whether the transaction would lead to competition concerns due to negative effects on prices, quality, choice, or innovation. Our assessment is limited to competition issues, has to be impartial and is subject to the scrutiny of the European Courts.

I have decided today to launch a so-called in-depth investigation into the merger. I am convinced that we need to take more time to investigate the preliminary concerns we have identified in pesticides, seeds and traits. The merger would combine two competitors with leading product portfolios and would take place in industries that are already globally concentrated, as illustrated by the recent mergers of Dow and DuPont and Syngenta and ChemChina, in which we intervened to protect competition for the benefit of farmers and consumers.

Seeds and pesticides are crucial inputs for farmers and the starting point of the food supply chain. We need to ensure effective competition in these markets so that farmers have choice, can purchase products at competitive prices and companies continue to innovate and invest in improved products.

Our investigation is on-going and the final deadline for the Commission's decision is currently 8 January 2018. Any update on the deadline will be published on the website of the Directorate-General for Competition of the Commission.

The other concerns you raise are handled by my colleagues and national authorities and are subject to European and national rules to protect food safety, consumers, the environment and the climate. For instance, the European Union has one of the most stringent regulatory systems for pesticides in the world and sets maximum residue levels for pesticides on food and feed to protect human and animal health.

Thank you for your inputs and interest in this important matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Margrethe Vestager', written in a cursive style.

Margrethe VESTAGER  
Member of the Commission

Petition emails received to date: more than 50,000  
Petition letters and postcards received to date: more than 5,000  
As well as many petition tweets (uncounted)