

Antitrust: Commission confirms unannounced inspections in the motor insurance market in Ireland

The European Commission can confirm that on 4 July 2017 its officials carried out unannounced inspections at the premises of companies active in motor insurance in the Republic of Ireland.

The Commission has concerns that the companies involved may have engaged in anti-competitive practices in breach of EU antitrust rules that prohibit cartels and restrictive business practices and/or abuse of a dominant market position (Articles 101 and 102 respectively of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union). The Commission officials were accompanied by their counterparts from the Irish Competition and Consumer Protection Commission.

Unannounced inspections are a preliminary step into suspected anti-competitive practices. The fact that the Commission carries out such inspections does not mean that the companies are guilty of anti-competitive behaviour nor does it prejudge the outcome of the investigation. The Commission respects the rights of defence, in particular the right of companies to be heard in antitrust proceedings.

There is no legal deadline to complete inquiries into anti-competitive conduct. Their duration depends on a number of factors, including the complexity of each case, the extent to which the companies concerned cooperate with the Commission and the exercise of the rights of defence.