



News Release

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CC PROVISIONALLY CLEARS TAMINCO ACQUISITION OF AIR PRODUCTS' EUROPEAN METHYLAMINES AND DERIVATIVES BUSINESSES

The Competition Commission (CC) has provisionally cleared the proposed acquisition of Air Products' European methylamines and methylamine derivatives business by Taminco NV (Taminco). The proposed acquisition was referred to the CC by the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) on 16 July 2004. The CC has provisionally concluded that it will not lead to a substantial lessening of competition in the market for methylamines or their derivatives.

Christopher Clarke, Chairman of the inquiry group and Deputy Chairman of the CC, commented on the findings:

We do not expect the acquisition by Taminco of Air Products' European business in methylamines and derivatives to lead to any substantial lessening of competition.

Our inquiry followed a strategic decision by Air Products in the Spring of 2003 to withdraw from the markets in methylamines and their derivatives in Europe. This led to the closure of its manufacturing plant at Billingham and to the proposed sale of the remaining parts of its business to Taminco. We are satisfied that Air Products will withdraw from these markets, come what may, and that their customers, who have not expressed any serious concerns, will not be adversely affected.

The CC's reasoning can be found in a summary of the provisional findings report which is published on its web site:

<http://www.competition-commission.org.uk/inquiries/current/taminco/index.htm>

The CC proposes to publish the full provisional findings report on its web site next week.

Air Products and Taminco have 21 days in which to respond. The CC also invites views on the provisional findings from other parties in writing by 19 November 2004.

Anyone wishing to submit views is requested to write to:

Inquiry Secretary, Taminco Air Products Merger Inquiry
Competition Commission
Victoria House
Southampton Row
London
WC1B 4AD

or email: nigel.dorling@competition-commission.gsi.gov.uk

Notes for editors

1. The Enterprise Act 2002 (the Act) empowers the OFT to refer to the CC completed or proposed mergers, either where the merger creates or enhances a 25 per cent share of supply in the UK (or a substantial part thereof) or where the UK turnover associated with the enterprise being acquired is over £70 million.
2. The CC has up to 24 weeks in which to investigate the merger and to publish its report. This period may be extended by no more than eight weeks if it considers that there are special reasons why the report cannot be published within that period. The report is due to be published by 30 December 2004.
3. The Act requires the CC to consult the main parties on its proposed decisions and the CC will also publish notices of its provisional findings and possible remedies on its web site as required by its rules.
4. The members of the inquiry Group are: Christopher Clarke (Chairman); Robert Bertram; Richard Holroyd; and Professor David Parker. They are supported by the CC's staff.
5. Enquiries should be directed to Francis Royle, Chief Press Officer, on 020 7271 0242 (email: francis.royle@competition-commission.gsi.gov.uk or Rory Taylor on 020 7271 0398 (email: rory.taylor@competition-commission.gsi.gov.uk).