

An undertaking may have misled applicants for solar panels

6 July 2022, Budapest – The Hungarian Competition Authority (GVH) has started an investigation against an undertaking for misleadingly promising to prepare residential solar panel tenders free of charge and for misleadingly advertising the free-of-charge nature of the systems it installs.

The GVH has started an investigation against EU-SOLAR Trade and Service Plc, an undertaking that installs solar panels, for possibly unfairly advertising its services to consumers. The undertaking may misleadingly claim that it prepares the public tenders by the name of "*Support for residential solar panel systems and electrification of heating systems in combination with solar panel systems*" free of charge – while the GVH suspects that consumers pay a fee for this, which cannot be reimbursed later. In addition, the undertaking may also misleadingly refer to the fact that it is free of charge, lacks self-resources or that it is 100% subsidised (eg. „*there is no need for equity or years of loan repayments, as H.E.T. provides a 100% subsidy*”; „*Now you can get a free solar panel system if you act early!*”). Consumers are likely to be obliged to pay not only the application preparation fees, but also a co-payment if their investment does not fit within the subsidy budget.

„Solar energy is an important tool for sustainable energy production and it therefore deserves the attention of public authorities if the use of subsidies to help people go green distorts consumers' decision-making, especially as regards the costs or fees they have to pay.” – said László Bak, Vice President of the GVH.

The initiation of the competition supervision proceeding does not mean that the undertaking has committed the infringement. The proceeding aims to clarify the facts and thereby prove the alleged infringement. The time limit for the completion of the proceeding is three months, which may be extended twice, in duly justified cases, for a maximum of two months each time.

Case number: **VJ/26/2022.**

Press Office of the GVH