



Fine amounting to HUF 1.6 billion imposed by the GVH on dating websites operated by a company registered in Luxembourg

17 August 2020 Budapest - The Hungarian Competition Authority (GVH) established that the be2.hu and academicsingles.hu dating websites had carried out a number of unfair commercial practices against consumers. Consequently, the Authority imposed a fine of HUF 1.6 billion on a company registered in Luxembourg that operates the websites. Furthermore, the concerned company was obliged to change some of its practices.

The Competition Authority's investigation, which was launched on the basis of a number of informal complaints, revealed that the practice of the company, which operates be2 S.à.r.l. dating sites, was based on confusing communication and misleading consumers. In its decision, the GVH emphasised that clear and transparent communication must be provided in all cases in relation to the prices and the contractual terms and conditions of the services in question (e.g. duration, automatic renewal). As regards to the operation of the websites, in the course of its investigation the Authority identified, among others, that the following practices amounted to unfair conduct:

- although the use of the websites was advertised as free of charge, it was not really possible to access the essence of the services free of charge, i.e. actual participation in the dating process (e.g. the sending of messages) was only possible for a fee;
- the portals provided difficult to detect and misleading information about the duration, automatic renewal and price of the subscription, which made consumers unaware of the actual duration and amount of their payment obligation;
- the dating sites failed to provide the information necessary for a realistic assessment of the services (e.g. possibility and form of cancellation) and the content of consumer complaints was inadequately handled, as evidenced by the fact that the company failed to change its communication practices and operation despite receiving a significant number of user complaints.

The Authority imposed a competition supervision fine of HUF 1.6 billion on the company, taking into account a number of circumstances, notably the gravity of the infringement and the consumer harm it caused. The fine was based on the company's sales revenue from domestic consumers between the end of 2017 and the end of the investigation. The company was also obliged by the GVH to modify its infringing communication practices within 30 days and to publish a corrective statement on the websites or to send it directly to the users. Based on the findings of the decision, users have the right to initiate litigation to enforce their civil claims directly in court.

The official registration number of the case is: **VJ/19/2018.**

GVH Press Office