

The GVH is initiating a proceeding in regard to the advertising of a product range that promises to cure COVID-19

26 March 2021, Budapest – The Hungarian Competition Authority (GVH) launched an investigation into the practices of the suppliers distributing the Virostop oral and nasal sprays, due to them allegedly making unfounded claims about the medicinal effects of their products and infringing several provisions of the regulations applicable to the distribution of medication and medical devices.

The GVH alleges that the undertakings distributing the Virostop oral spray against influenza and the Virostop nasal spray made misleading claims about their products being suitable for the treatment of illnesses, including COVID-19 infections. (*E.g. ‘...effective at preventing novel coronavirus infections (COVID-19), influenza, and cold (other viral and bacterial respiratory infections), as well as protecting against and treating infections’; ‘creates a protective film on the mucous membrane, thus combating a wide variety of viruses and bacteria, including COVID-19, as well as influenza, and simple seasonal cold infections’*).

Furthermore, the GVH considers it likely that the advertisements infringe multiple provisions of the sectoral regulations on the distribution of medical devices: they failed to clearly display the applicable product category, described the devices in a different manner than their user instructions, and did not include the mandatory warnings, among others. It may also infringe the applicable legislation that the products were being advertised on social media with the help of well-known public figures, together with the fact that the advertisements appeared in a covert manner on certain platforms, disguised as editorial content, thus not making it clear to customers that what they were seeing was a paid advertisement.

The initiation of the competition supervision proceeding does not mean that the undertaking has in fact committed the infringement. The proceeding is aimed at clarifying the facts and thereby proving the alleged infringement. The time limit for the completion of the proceeding is three months which, where justified, may be extended on two occasions by a maximum of two months each.

The official registration number of the case is: **VJ/13/2021**.

GVH Press Office