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Directorate for Financial and Enterprise Affairs  
**COMPETITION COMMITTEE**

## Annual Report on Competition Policy Developments in Bulgaria

-- 2021 --

This report is submitted by Bulgaria to the Competition Committee FOR INFORMATION.

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## *Bulgaria*

### Introduction

1. The Commission on Protection of Competition (the Commission, CPC) is an independent state authority whose main task is to ensure the protection and create conditions for development of competition and free enterprise, including through the exercise of control on the legality of the budget spending through the public procurement system and the granting of concessions.
2. The powers of the Commission are set forth in the Law on Protection of Competition (LPC), the Law on Public Procurement Act (LPP) and the Law on Concessions (LC).
3. In pursuance of its powers pursuant to LPC, the Commission adopts decisions with which it establishes the presence or absence of infringements constituting abuse of monopoly or dominant position, prohibited agreements or concerted practices and unfair competition. It carries out control on the concentration between undertakings and it can permit, including conditionally, or prohibit its implementation. Some of the powers of the Commission are also preparation of sector analyses and implementation of competition advocacy, offering the competent executive authorities and local self-government to repeal or amend regulatory acts issued in infringement of the competition rules. The draft regulatory acts to be adopted accordingly are subject to analysis for their compliance with the LPC, for which purpose the Commission adopts opinions.
4. The CPC is the authority that hears appeals on the legality of all acts or omissions of contracting authorities and grantors in public procurement award procedures or granting of concessions. Pursuant to the Public Procurement Act and the Concessions Act, the CPC can stop a public procurement award procedure, respectively the granting of a concession, permit prior enforcement of decisions on selection of a contractor, in the presence of such conditions as specified in those acts, and impose financial penalties and fines in the cases provided by law.
5. The Commission on Protection of Competition is the national authority of the Republic of Bulgaria responsible for the enforcement of the EU law in the field of competition.
6. This summary of the Annual report includes information concerning the competences of the CPC concerning prohibited agreements, abuse of dominant position, concentrations, sector inquiries and competition advocacy.

### 1. Legislative developments

7. The Law on Protection of Competition was amended (promulgated State Gazette, issue 17 of 26 February 2021) in order to transpose into Bulgarian legislation Directive (EU) 2019/1 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2018 to empower the competition authorities of the Member States to be more effective enforcers and to ensure the proper functioning of the internal market, Directive (EU) 2019/633 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 April 2019 on unfair trading practices in business-to-business relationships in the agricultural and food supply chain, as well as

provisions of Regulation (EU) 2017/2394 in connection with the powers of the CPC regarding misleading advertising and unauthorized comparative advertising under Art. 32 of the LPC.

8. The amendments to the LPC required the adoption of completely new: Methodology on determination of sanctions and fines imposed under the Law on Protection of Competition, Rules on considering proposals for undertaking of commitments under the Law on Protection of Competition, Programme for immunity from sanction or reduction of sanctions and Rules on the implementation of the Programme for immunity from sanction or reduction of sanctions, Rules on approval of measures for preserving competition in cases of concentrations of undertakings. With regard to the increased and expanded powers of the CPC according to the amendments of the LPC, Rules on prioritization of requests for initiation of proceedings under Chapter Nine and Chapter Twelve of the Law on Protection of Competition and new Rules of Organization of the Commission were adopted.

## 2. 2. Prohibited agreements, decisions and concerted practices

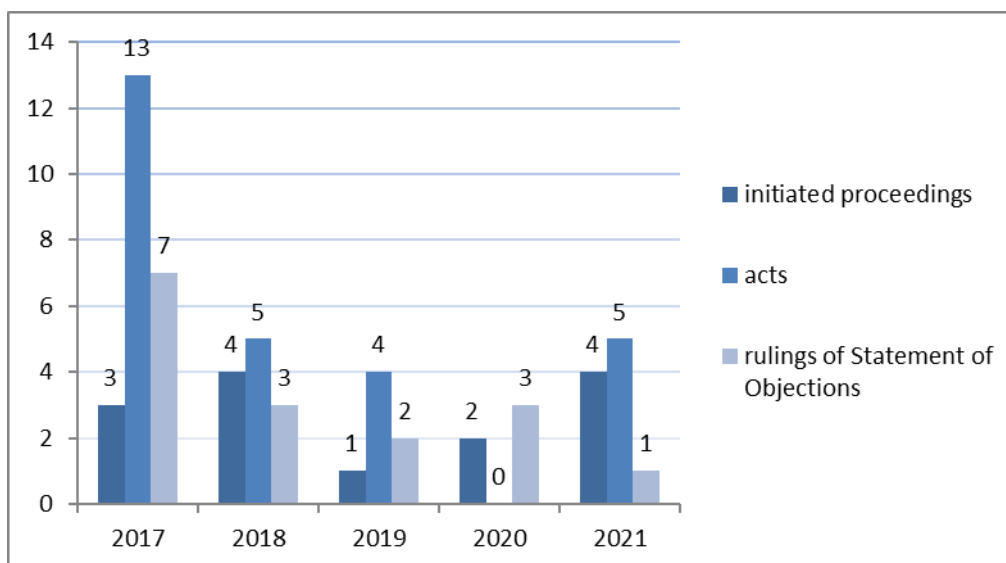
### 2.1. Proceedings

In 2021 the Commission initiated **4 proceedings** which has as subject the establishment of the presence or absence of prohibited agreements, decisions and concerted practices of the LPC on request of persons whose interests are affected or threatened by infringement of the LPC.

### 2.2. Decisions and rulings

In 2021 the Commission adopted **5 decisions** with regard to the application of Art. 15 of the LPC on proceedings initiated in the period from 2016 to 2020 and **1 ruling** of Statement of Objections.

Figure 1. Proceedings and acts under Chapter Three of the LPC 2017-2021



9. In the reporting year the efforts of the Commission were targeted mainly at the conclusion of proceedings with sent Statement of Objections in 2020 as well as at preliminary investigations aiming *ex officio* initiation of proceedings for finding of bid rigging.

### 2.3. Examples from the practice

10. By **Decision 369/08.04.2021** the Commission on Protection of Competition imposed a pecuniary sanction in the amount of 434 634 Bulgarian leva on SMART SM OOD for committed infringement of Art. 15 of the LPC, manifested in participation in a prohibited agreement for resale price maintenance of child care and mother care products between SMART SM and its clients.

11. By **Decision 370/08.04.2021**, the Commission established infringements of Art. 15 of the LPC, committed by Iventas EOOD and manifested in participation in series of prohibited agreements with the retailers for fixing the retail prices and also for limiting trade by setting different levels of commercial discounts and conditions for their use, depending on the resale channel – via online or physical shop.

12. For the established infringements the Commission imposed a pecuniary sanction on Iventas in the amount of 522 996 Bulgarian leva.

13. Both administrative proceedings have been initiated upon a signal filed by consumer, which contains observations for permanently identical prices of Phillips Avent and Medela breast pumps in stores operated by various retailers.

14. Following the received signal, the Commission conducted unannounced inspections at the premises of Iventas, SMART SM and Hippoland, where copies of electronic correspondence, commercial contracts, and other documents were seized.

15. In the course of the proceedings, the CPC collected detailed information from numerous traders of children's goods on the territory of the country.

16. Based on the analysis of the collected information and evidence, the CPC established that Smart and Iventas as suppliers of various brands children's goods, such as Medela, Canpol, Phillips Avent, Tommee Tippee, etc., have coordinated together with their counterparties the resale prices for end consumers, time periods of promotional activities, the range of products to be included and the specific promotional price.

17. The CPC established that each supplier engaged in a set of practices, actions and measures to stimulate and support the implementation of the prohibited agreements. In addition, each one of them provided information to its customers about its own behavior as a participant in the retail market, reaffirming the belief that exactly the indicated product prices should be applied as end customer prices.

18. Such agreements have potential to eliminate price competition between distributors of the same brand, as well as to eliminate the possibility of decrease in consumer prices as a result of competitive pressure. This results in stable prices over time, other than those that would occur in competitive environment. This behaviour of the undertakings affects the welfare of consumers of many products, such as breast pumps and feeding bottles, appliances, strollers, toys, cosmetics for babies and young children, maternal care products, etc.

19. In addition, the Commission found that there was an agreement between Iventas and its e-shop retailers to limit online sales. This agreement objectively has the potential to limit the resale of products online and has an adverse effect on price levels in the long run.

20. By its decisions, the Commission ordered the termination of the established infringements.

21. By **Decision № 791/29.07.2021**, the Commission on Protection of Competition established an infringement of Art. 15, para. 1 of the LPC, consisting of a prohibited agreement between the suppliers Mayoral Moda Infantil S.A. and Mayoral Bulgaria EOOD, on the one hand, and retailers, on the other, to fix resale prices and set minimum resale prices to end customers of Mayoral products, which in its purpose prevents, restricts or distorts competition in the market of trade in children's clothing, footwear and accessories from middle to high class on the territory of the country. For the committed infringement a pecuniary sanction was imposed on Mayoral Moda Infantil S.A. in the amount of 1 827 007 Bulgarian leva.

22. The proceedings were initiated on complaint of Comsed AD. In the course of the investigation, facts and circumstances were established, which together show a long-established policy of the respondent parties in their relations with retailers, aimed at equalizing the prices of products for end users. The prohibited agreement consists in applying the same regular resale prices to end customers and minimum prices during the reduction periods.

23. The purpose of this agreement is to eliminate price competition between retailers and to restrict their freedom to determine independently the prices at which they offer goods, as well as their possibility to offer discounts on products in accordance with the principle of demand. In the absence of such a prohibited agreement, every retailer could offer products at prices which are result of the natural market pressure from competitors. This agreement makes it impossible for consumers to buy the products at lower prices.

24. By the decision, the Commission ordered termination of the established infringement.

25. By **Decision 762/22.07.2021** the Commission established an infringement of Art. 15, paragraph 1 of the LPC between the participants in a public tender under the National Program for energy efficiency of multi-family residential buildings, opened by Decision of March 2015 of the mayor of Plovdiv municipality.

26. The established infringement is a cartel (prohibited agreement) for manipulating the public tender for conducting audits to establish the technical characteristics and technical passports of buildings and audits on energy efficiency of buildings and prescription of the necessary energy saving measures.

27. The infringement lasted from 01.10.2015 to 26.06.2017.

28. In the course of the investigation, the CPC found that the participants have reached an agreement to distribute the tendered lots and to coordinate the prices offered to the contracting authority. The agreement has as its object complete elimination of competition at the stage of bid submission by predefining the winning bidder for each lot and thus predetermining the choice of the contracting authority.

29. The Commission based its conclusions on collected electronic correspondence between the participants, evidence provided by the public authorities and the bidders themselves.

30. The Commission granted leniency to one of the cartel participants and reduced the amount of the fine by 50% to another one, based on their cooperation to the investigation. The companies have submitted immunity/reduction of fines applications along with evidence within the Leniency program, that allowed the Commission to prove the infringement.

31. The total amount of fines is 388 687 Bulgarian leva.

### 3. Abuse of monopoly and dominant position

#### 3.1. Proceedings

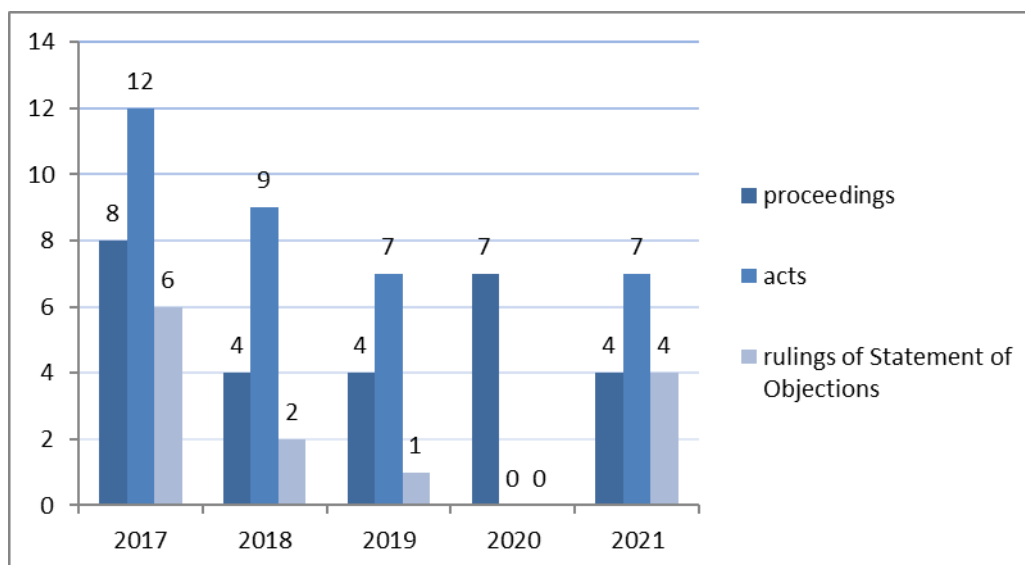
32. In 2021 the Commission initiated **4 proceedings**<sup>1</sup> with subject establishment of the presence or absence of infringements under Chapter Four “*Abuse of monopoly or dominant position*” of the LPC. Three of them are initiated on request of persons whose interests are affected or threatened by infringement of the LPC and one is initiated *ex officio* after preliminary investigation of a signal of a consumer.

#### 3.2. Decisions and rulings

33. In 2021 the Commission adopted **4 rulings** for sending Statement of Objections for infringement of Art. 21 of the LPC.

34. In 2021 the Commission adopted a total of **7 decisions** with regard to the application of Art. 21 of the LPC.

Figure 2. Proceedings and acts under Chapter 4 of the LPC 2017-2021



#### 3.3. Examples from the practice

35. By **Ruling 1082/11.11.2021** the CPC filed allegations against Lukoil Neftochim Burgas AD and Lukoil-Bulgaria EOOD for an infringement of Art. 21, point 2 and point 5 of the LPC and Art. 102 (b) of the TFEU, expressed in an abuse of a dominant position on the market for storage of automotive fuels by not providing access to importers and producers of automotive fuels to their own tax warehouses, restricting import by sea by blocking tax warehouses, as well as failure to provide access to the oil pipelines of the group for transportation of fuels of other manufacturers and importers, which may prevent,

<sup>1</sup> One of the proceedings is initiated for establishment of infringements of both Art. 15 and Art. 21 of the LPC.

restrict or distort competition and affect consumer interests by restricting imports of motor fuels in the country.

36. The Commission has found that the Lukoil Group has the largest storage and related transport infrastructure, making it the dominant undertaking in the motor fuel storage market. The companies in the group have abused their dominant position through a set of actions, such as non-provision of services for reception and storage of fuels in their own tax warehouses, restriction of access to tax warehouses connected to the largest marine oil terminals in the country and non-provision of access to the oil pipelines of the group for transportation of imported fuels.

37. The established practices represent a general strategy of the group for creating barriers to the import of fuels in the country and thus should be qualified as a single infringement, as they have been aimed at the same anti-competitive result.

38. These actions of the Lukoil Group restrict competition at the first level in the chain of sales of petroleum products – in production and import, which allows maintaining the leading position of the Lukoil Group in the country at the next levels - wholesale and retail trade. The creation of barriers to the import of fuels in the country is of a nature to lead to a redirection of demand for fuels of local origin, i.e. those of LUKOIL Neftochim Burgas AD. This reduces the choice of wholesalers and accordingly shifts down the sales chain of motor fuels and ultimately to consumers.

39. The conduct constitutes an abuse of dominance, both under national law and under European Union law, as restricting imports into the country can significantly affect the pattern of trade between Member States.

40. By **Ruling 1234/16.12.2021**, the CPC has addressed to „Veolia Energy Varna“ EAD Statement of objections for committed infringement of Art. 21, point 2 of the LPC, manifested in an abuse of a dominant position, aimed at restricting trade and technical development on the market of heat cost allocation in Varna, carried out by promoting the heat cost allocation without technical devices for its measurement, as well as by unilateral replacement of water meters of customers, served by other providers of heat cost allocation services, thus hindering their activity, which directly or indirectly affects the interests of consumers.

41. The proceedings before the CPC have been initiated upon a formal complaint from “Holiday and Raisen” EOOD, Varna.

42. Based on the evidence, collected in the proceedings, the Commission found that the respondent company is the only participant and an undertaking with a dominant position on the market of transmission and supply of heating energy for consumers in condominiums on the territory of Varna. This market, in turn, has a direct impact on the vertically integrated market for heat cost allocation, where Veolia is a competitor of “Holiday and Raisen” EOOD.

43. The analysed behaviour of „Veolia Energy Varna“ EAD is carried out by implementing an overall strategy of restricting the market of heat cost allocation in Varna in the period 2015-2020, leading to an outflow of consumers and subsequent reduction in the activity of the providers of heat cost allocation.



## 4. Control on concentrations between undertakings

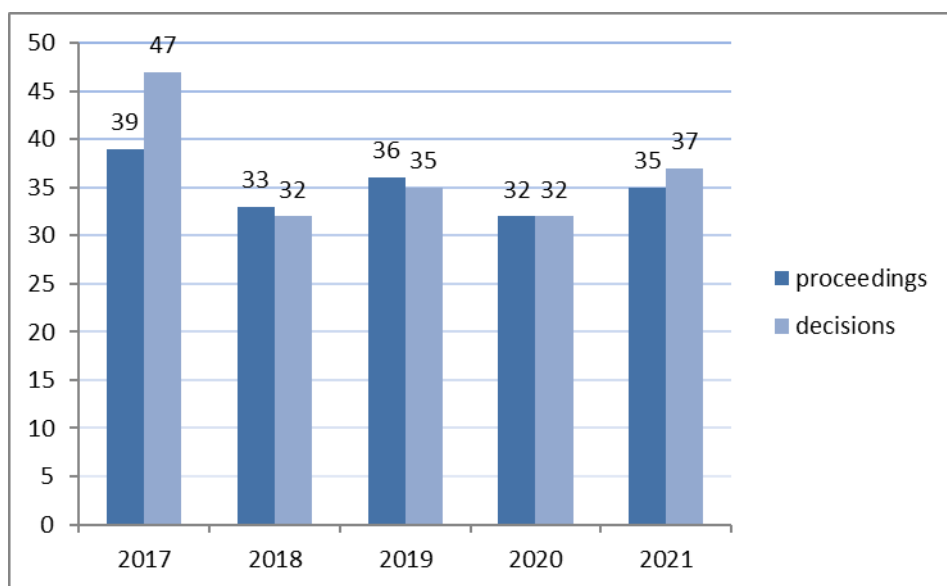
### 4.1. Proceedings

44. In 2021 the Commission initiated a total of **35 proceedings** on the basis of notifications for authorization of concentration between undertakings.

### 4.2. Decisions and rulings

45. In 2021 the Commission adopted a total of **37 decisions** under Chapter Five of the LPC, five of which in proceedings initiated in the end of 2020.

Figure 3. Proceedings and decisions under Chapter 5 of the LPC 2017 -2021



46. In all of the initiated cases the CPC, in the course of preliminary investigation under Art. 80 and Art. 81 of the LPC, authorized unconditionally the realization of the notified transactions.

### 4.3. Economic sectors with concentrations on the national market in 20212

47. The Commission has assessed and adopted decisions for authorization of concentrations between undertakings mainly in the following economic sectors: energy (7 decisions); telecommunications (3 decisions); import and sale of motor vehicles and spare parts (3 decisions); pharmacy (2 decisions); media (2 decisions).

### 4.4. Example from the practice

48. By **Decision 371/17.06.2021**, the CPC authorized, within an accelerated investigation, Sandoz AG to acquire sole control over the separate business for the sale of cephalosporin antibiotics under the trade names Zinnat, Zinacef and Fortum of GlaxoSmithKline. The CPC accepted that there was a concentration in the meaning of Art.

<sup>2</sup> Includes only the decisions for authorization and blocking of concentrations (total 26).

22, para. 1, point 2 of the LPC, as the assets – object of acquisition, carry out independent commercial activity, i.e. they have access to the market and form an independent turnover.

49. The Commission found that the notified transaction led to a horizontal overlap between the activities of the participants in the concentration of the market for the supply of cephalosporins with prescription in Bulgaria, regardless of the distribution channels. In accordance with the approach applied in the practice of the European Commission and the NCAs, the Commission determined the market position of the participants in the concentration of the affected product market at level ATC 3, as well as in its narrower definition (level ATC 4) on the basis of the value of sales. Their combined market share in 2020 decreases to [20-30]% at the level ATC 3, and to [30-40]% at the level ATC 4. In its analysis, the Commission took into account the circumstance that at the date of notification on the Bulgarian market two of Sandoz's cephalosporin antibiotics (Biodroxil and CEC) are not offered any more. Therefore, given the shrinking product portfolio of the acquiring undertaking, the overall market share in the country of the participants in the transaction after its implementation is expected to be lower. Sandoz will only add Zinnat to its portfolio, which will not significantly expand its portfolio at the expense of other market participants, but will rather equalize with the main market participants.

50. In the present case, the calculated values of the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI) before and after the concentration at level ATC 3 amount to 1489 and 1702 respectively and show that the relevant market is relatively competitive with a moderate level of concentration. Given the established values of HHI and the absence of the special circumstances exhaustively listed in the Methodology for determining the position of undertakings on the relevant market, the CPC accepted that in this case the concentration does not present a significant concern for competition in the affected market. Based on the market share data of the market participants, determined on the basis of revenue, at level ATC 4, the HHI values before and after the concentration amounted to 2405 and 3127, respectively, at delta 722. The Commission has repeatedly adopted in its decisions that the market share as well as the values of HHI, provide only initial indication of the structure of the market and the significance of the individual participants acting in it. In assessing the effect of the transaction on the competitive environment, other circumstances should be taken into account, such as the characteristics of the structure of the relevant market in terms of supply and demand, legal, economic or other barriers to entry, economic strength of market participants and other factors depending on the specific case. In this case, the Commission took into account the fact that on the market of cephalosporin there is not small number of participants - international and local, which belong to large economic groups (Alkaloid, Nobel, Medokemi, Ecopharm BG, Tchaikapharma and others). These companies are permanently established on the Bulgarian market, offering antibiotic products established from years that are well known to medical professionals. The existence of competitors as an alternative choice for wholesalers and consumers gives them possibility for mobility to easily switch to another producer depending on their trade policy. In the course of the proceedings, the Commission found that cephalosporin antibiotics are available only on prescription and could only be advertised to medical professionals. The choice of attending physicians is determined by the specifics of each case and the Local Guidelines, as well as by their loyalty and/or trust in a particular brand. In its assessment, the Commission also took into account the fact that the pricing of medicinal products, including mark-ups at wholesale and retail levels, is monitored by the National Council for Prices and Reimbursement of Medicinal Products. The requirement for administrative approval of the relevant price of cephalosporin antibiotics ensures that market participants cannot significantly affect the pricing of cephalosporins and cannot unilaterally increase the prices of cephalosporin products after conclusion of the planned concentration. With

regard to this, the CPC accepted that the planned transaction has no potential to lead to unfavourable for the consumers price changes of cephalosporin antibiotics.

51. On the basis of the overall analysis, the CPC did not accept as justified the concerns of third parties received in the course of the accelerated investigation for negative affecting of the market as a result of the transaction and unconditionally authorised its implementation.

52. The decision has not been appealed and has entered into force.

## 5. Sector inquiries

53. By **Decision 1145/25.11.2021** the CPC initiated proceedings for conducting a sector inquiry of the competitive environment on the market of electronic trade in consumer goods and services on the territory of the country.

54. Within the proceedings an in-depth analysis will be carried out of the functioning of the e-commerce market for the most popular consumer goods and services online, the impact of market forces on the behaviour of the participants in it, as well as information on barriers to competition and the effects of the expansion of e-commerce. Given its legal powers, the CPC will request up-to-date information from the competent state authorities, the relevant branch organizations and the market participants.

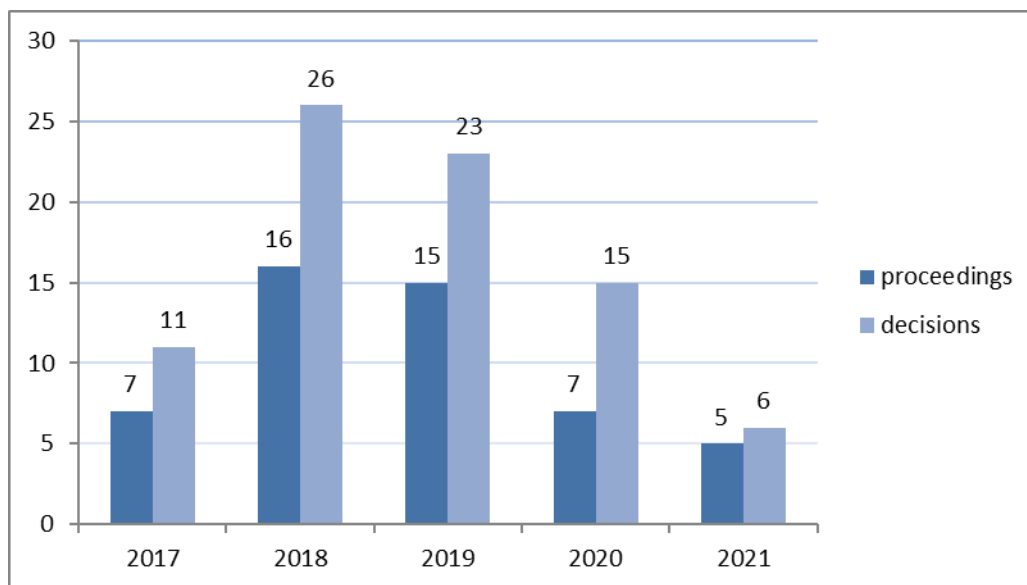
55. Such an analysis will give the CPC a detailed idea of the current market processes and the need for possible additional initiatives and measures by the Commission, according to the provisions of the LPC, to support the competitive process and contribute to the proper development of the market environment. After analysing the information gathered, the CPC will draw conclusions about the state of the competitive environment and in the presence of sufficient evidence could exercise its powers under Art. 91, para. 5, point 1 and/or point 2 of the LPC by informing the competent authorities about the need to take measures to improve the competitive environment in the sector.

## 6. Competition advocacy

### 6.1. Proceedings and decisions

56. In **2021** the Commission has initiated a total of **5 proceedings** and has adopted **6 decisions** with opinions on draft or effective legislative or administrative acts and finding the presence or lack of contradiction with competition rules are adopted.

Figure 4. Proceedings and decisions on competition advocacy 2017-2021



57. In 2021 the CPC has made recommendations for amendment and supplementation of the following draft legislative acts:

- Draft decision of the Communications Regulation Commission for amendment of the Methodology for the terms and procedure for determination, analysis and assessment of the relevant markets and the criteria for determining the undertakings with significant market power

58. The CPC has made proposals for amendment and supplementation of the following legislative and legislative administrative acts in force as they create conditions for prevention, restriction or distortion of competition:

- Law on energy;
- Ordinance E-RD-04-1 of 12 March 2020 on heat supply.

## 6.2. Example from the practice

### 6.2.1. Heat cost allocation

59. By **Decision 1086 /11.11.2021**, the CPC adopted an opinion on compliance with the competition rules of the Law on Energy and the Ordinance on Heat Supply, regulating the relations between district heating companies and heat cost allocation companies.

60. Based on the already established practice in competition advocacy and the additional analysis carried out in this opinion, the Commission finds that the amended in 2006 regulatory regime under the Law on Energy, regulating the relationship between heat cost allocation companies and district heating companies, is able to create competition concerns. Evidence of this are several issued decisions of the CPC, establishing abuse of a dominant position by district heating companies in relation to heat cost allocation companies.

61. The Commission confirms the repeatedly expressed opinion that the legislation setting the heat cost allocation companies as subcontractors of the district heating company with regard to the heat cost allocation, whose relations are regulated in general conditions

approved by the Energy and Water Regulation Commission (EWRC), leads to exchange of sensitive trade information between competitors and is of a nature to create opportunities for the district heating company to abuse a dominant position. This may limit the access of new firms to the heat cost allocation market or foreclose existing heat cost allocation companies. In this way, legislation also eliminates the free pricing of an unregulated market.

62. In addition, the legislation on the Law Energy and the Ordinance on Heat Supply place district heating companies in a more favourable position as heat cost allocation providers than their competitors – other heat cost allocation companies, as district heating companies do not enter into contracts for the heat cost allocation service with themselves.

63. The CPC considers that in the cases of free market and free choice of heat cost allocation company by the clients, the control over the activity of the selected company cannot be transferred to another business entity (district heating company), which carries out the same activity on the same market and is its competitor. The control functions for the implementation of a law or other regulation are part of the powers of normatively determined state bodies and these powers cannot be delegated to entities which are undertakings within the meaning of the Law on Protection of Competition and are not state or local authorities.

64. The CPC proposes to the competent authorities to consider two possible options for amending and supplementing the legislation:

65. Option 1 - Repeal of the status of the heat cost allocation companies as subcontractors of the district heating companies and restoration of the direct contractual relations between the heat cost allocation companies and the end customers.

66. The application of this model of free market relations between end customers and heat cost allocation companies is optimal from the point of view of competition rules. In it, all heat cost allocation companies, including district heating companies, which are registered as heat cost allocation companies, actively compete to attract customers with the quality and price of the service offered.

67. Option 2 - Additions/amendments to the current model of the relationship between district heating companies and heat cost allocation companies in order to create guarantees of equality between the parties and avoid distortions of competition.

68. In this model of relationship, in which heat cost allocation companies are subcontractors of district heating companies and operate on the basis of a contract with the district heating company, certain additions/amendments to the regulations would minimize some of the main negative effects on competition.

69. In particular, the CPC proposes that contracts between district heating companies and heat cost allocation companies to be concluded under general conditions, which are approved by the EWRC on the proposal of the district heating companies, but with the participation of heat cost allocation companies as parties and stakeholders in these contracts. It is also necessary to stipulate in the Law on Energy (Art. 139c) that the clauses under the individual contracts cannot derogate from the provisions approved by the EWRC in the general conditions, and the control over the observance of the general conditions is assigned to EWRC. It is also essential to repeal the provision of Art. 139c, para 3, item 4 of the Law on Energy, according to which the heat cost allocation companies provide sensitive commercial information to the district heating company, which in turn determines the price of the heat cost allocation service of its competitors.

## 7. European affairs

70. In 2021 the CPC participated in 25 virtual meetings of horizontal working groups and sectoral subgroups (specialized in sectors of the economy) in the European Competition Network (ECN), in which ideas and experiences are exchanged on issues of interest to the members of the network. Representatives of the CPC also took part in 2 virtual Plenary meetings, at which issues related to the policy and practice of the application of competition rules were discussed, opinions were expressed on issues raised by the working groups, documents developed within the respective working groups were adopted. The CPC took part online in 1 meeting of the Advisory Committee on Concentrations in the role of rapporteur, as well as in 1 meeting of the Advisory Committee in connection with a legislative initiative of the European Commission.

71. In June and November 2021 the Deputy Chairman of the CPC, Mr. Dimitar Kyumyurdzhiev took part in virtual meetings of the chairpersons of the competition authorities of the ECN, where issues related to the improvement of competition law, current issues in the field of antitrust and concentrations, as well as cooperation within the network were discussed.

## 8. International cooperation

### 8.1. Participation in the International Competition Network

72. As a member of the International Competition Network (ICN), the CPC continued its active participation in the working groups of the Network in 2021. Representatives of the CPC took part in the Annual Conference of the ICN, which took place online in October 2021, as well as in a number of virtual workshops organized within the working groups of the ICN.

### 8.2. Cooperation in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

73. Representatives of the CPC took part in the online sessions of the OECD Competition Committee in June and December 2021 as well as in the Global Forum on Competition in December 2021.

74. Representatives of the CPC participated also in an OECD online workshop on “Regulatory barriers to competition in professional services: measurement and reform experience”.

75. Experts of the CPC joined actively in the online seminars of the Regional centre for competition of the OECD in Budapest.

### 8.3. Exchange of information in the networks and organisations in which the CPC participates

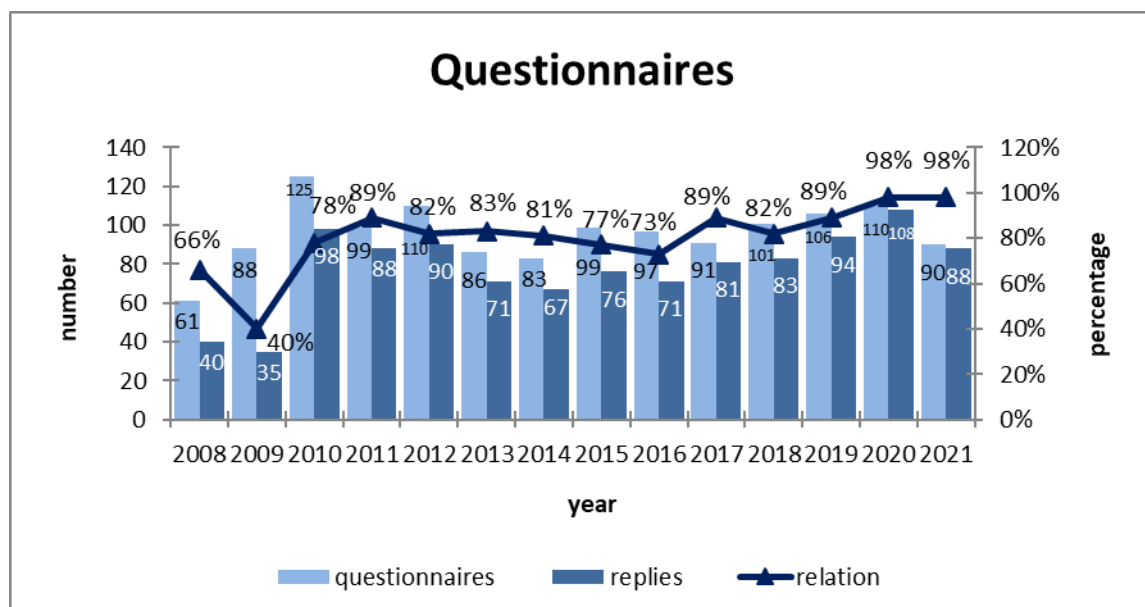
76. The CPC receives multiple and various questionnaires arising from the cooperation within the ECN, ICN and other organisations.

77. In 2021 the trend of increase in the number of the received questionnaires, which is observed since 2018, is broken and they decrease to 90, which is comparable to their level of 2017 when they are 91. As a result of the lower number of questionnaires the replies

decrease in absolute value (88), but the percentage of the replied questionnaires remains 98% which is the highest level achieved so far.

78. The chart presents data for the number of questionnaires, the replies by the CPC and the percentage of the replied questionnaires.

**Figure 5. Received questionnaires and replies by the CPC in the period 2008-2021**



## 9. Administrative capacity and financial activity

### 9.1. Human resources management

79. The organizational structure and the size of the administration are set out in the Commission's Rules of Procedure. The total number of positions – 117, include: Chairperson, Deputy Chairman, five Members of the Commission, Chief Secretary, Information Security Officer, General Administration – 23 employees, and specialized administration – 80 employees.

80. High qualified specialists are working in the Commission, 96% of which with higher education whose educational level meets the aims and tasks of the CPC.

### 9.2. Financial activity

81. The approved expenses in the budget of the Commission on Protection of Competition for 2021 are in the amount of 5 835 400 Bulgarian leva (around 2 980 000 Euro).

82. In 2021 the revenue collected from fees, pecuniary sanctions and other non-tax revenues are in the amount of 10 324 724 Bulgarian leva (around 5 280 000 Euro).