

Company AS Ekspress Grupp  
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## Currency

Title The Lithuanian Competition Council has published a decision regarding the acquisition of

Ekspress Grupp is challenging in court a decision issued by the Lithuanian Competition Council, by which it imposed a fine on the company for violating the competition rules when purchasing the news portal Lrytas in Lithuania.

On 22 December, the Lithuanian Competition Council published a decision in which concludes that Ekspress Grupp was under obligation to obtain permission of the Lithuanian Competition Council for the acquisition of Lrytas prior to the implementation of the transaction but failed to do so. The decision imposed EUR 140 460 fine on Ekspress Grupp and obligation to remedy the situation.

Mari-Liis Rüütsalu, Chairman of the Management Board of Ekspress Grupp, noted that Ekspress Grupp does not agree with the positions of the Lithuanian Competition Council and is going to challenge the decision in court:

?The nature of the dispute concerns the interpretation of the geographical allocation of Lrytas turnover before the transaction under Lithuanian law. According to Lithuanian competition rules, transactions that exceed certain turnover limits can only be carried out with the prior permission of the Lithuanian Competition Council. We and our legal advisers from the law firm Ellex are of the opinion that the Lithuanian turnover of the companies before acquiring the portal was below the 20 million euros limit that required consent and the prior consent of the competition authority was not required. In our view, our position is compliant with European competition rules. Tax authorities in various European countries also classify the generation of turnover according to a similar geographical principle to us. However, the competing Lithuanian news portal 15min, owned by Postimees Grupp, filed a complaint against the transaction, on the basis of which the agency carried out a supervisory procedure.

We want the court to make a legal assessment of the matter and we will act accordingly. If the decision of Competition Council will not be suspended by a court for the period of legal dispute, Ekspress Grupp will have to go through a merger control procedure. According to the law, Ekspress Grupp will also be



required to pay the amount of the fine imposed for the duration of the litigation, despite its disagreement with the findings of the authority."

At the end of 2022, AS Ekspress Grupp and the publisher of the largest Lithuanian newspaper UAB "Lietuvos rytas" signed an agreement (<https://view.news.eu.nasdaq.com/view?id=b3244c7dfd30ede01f57b8a40ad49690e&lang=en>) to acquire 100% shares of UAB "Lrytas", a subsidiary that publishes the online news portal lrytas.lt. Founded in 2006, lrytas.lt is a Lithuanian news portal that delivers news in Lithuanian and English languages.

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AS Ekspress Grupp is the leading Baltic media group whose key activities include web media content production, and publishing of newspapers, magazines and books. The Group also operates an electronic ticket sales platform and ticket sales offices and offers outdoor screen service in Estonia and Latvia. Ekspress Grupp launched its operations in 1989 and employs almost 1100 people.

