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Cartel investigation into the sugar industry

On 13 May 2009 the Hungarian Competition Authority (the GVH) carried out dawn raids at the premises of Agrana Magyarország Értékesítési Kft., Eastern Sugar Cukoripari Zrt. and Mátra Cukor Mátravidéki Cukorgyárak Zrt.

Based on the information available it can be assumed that the sugar producers interested in the Hungarian sugar market have carried out negotiations since 2003 in order to align their market behaviour. The alleged negotiations and agreements covered the determination of prices for certain groups of products, and they were aiming at maintaining the market shares of the undertakings concerned. In some cases the prices of some products and the amounts supplied to some customers may have been fixed.

The GVH may conduct on spot inspections without any preliminary notification based on the Competition Act. Pursuant to the provisions of the Competition Act, the inspections are subject to the attainment in advance of a judicial authorisation.

The initiation of the competition supervision proceeding does not mean that the undertakings in question actually committed the infringement. The proceeding targets the clarification of the facts and thus to prove that the infringement assumed has been committed. According to the Act such proceedings must be closed within 180 days, however, this time limit can be extended two times by further 180 days each, depending on the complexity of the case.

Case number: **Vj-50/2009**.

Budapest, 15 May 2009

Hungarian Competition Authority
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