

[PL] Polish telecommunications company cautioned for anti-competitive advertising

IRIS 2017-5:1/29

*Pierre-Marie Coupez
Stopp Pick & Kallenborn, Saarbrücken*

The Polish Office of Competition and Consumer Protection (UOKiK) has decided that advertising by Vectra Ltd was anti-competitive because it had failed to sufficiently inform customers that the price would be increased after the promotional period.

Vectra Ltd provides telecommunications services such as cable TV, Internet access and fixed-line telephony in Poland. Between September and December 2015, it organised a sales promotion under the slogan “You can have it all for 10 zlotys”. During that period, all services offered by the company were available for PLN 10. The various advertisements for the special offer (including radio announcements) made no reference at all to any price increase, even though Vectra had planned to raise the fees for each service after only two or three months of contracts concluded for a period of 18 months or two years, for example.

The Office of Competition and Consumer Protection therefore launched an investigation and concluded that the advertising was liable to mislead consumers. It ruled that the failure to mention a subsequent price increase had generated the interest of customers and induced them to sign contracts that they would not have otherwise signed. Vectra should somehow have made it known that it planned to raise prices after a few months.

However, during the proceedings, Vectra voluntarily decided to compensate all customers who had taken advantage of the promotional offer.

Vectra was also ordered by the UOKiK to inform the public that the offer had been liable to mislead consumers. This statement, lasting at least 15 seconds, should be broadcast three times by the company itself. Vectra must also file a report on the performance of its obligations.

This is not a one-off decision; it forms part of the UOKiK’s current efforts to exert pressure on telecommunications service providers and punish them for breaking the rules, in order to ensure that they protect consumers and respect the law in future.

UOKiK press release of 8 February 2017

https://www.uokik.gov.pl/news.php?news_id=12922

