



Decision CPC: 50/2021

Case Number: 08.05.001.021.039

## THE CONTROL OF CONCENTRATIONS BETWEEN ENTERPRISES LAW

No. 83(I)/2014

### Notification of a concentration concerning the acquisition of the share capital of Axelos Ltd, by PeopleCert International Ltd

Commission for the Protection of Competition:

Mrs. Loukia Christodoulou,	Chairperson
Mr. Panayiotis Ousta	Member
Mr. Aristos Aristeidou Palouzas	Member
Mr. Polynikis-Panagiotis Charalambides	Member
Mr. Andreas Karydis	Member

Date of Decision: 26<sup>th</sup> of July 2021

#### SUMMARY OF THE DECISION

On 22/06/2021, the Commission for the Protection of Competition (hereinafter the “Commission”) received on behalf of PeopleCert International Ltd (hereinafter “PeopleCert”) a notification of a proposed concentration. The notification was filed according to Section 10 of the Control of Concentrations between Enterprises Law 83(I)/14 (hereinafter the “Law”).

The notification concerns a concentration, according to which, PeopleCert will acquire the share capital of Axelos Ltd (hereinafter the “Target”).

The parties of the transaction are the following:

1. PeopleCert International Limited is a limited liability company, duly registered in accordance with the laws of the Republic of Cyprus. It is a member of

PeopleCert Group, which is a global provider of professional and language skills assessment and certification services. This Group cooperates with multinational organizations and government agencies to develop and conduct examinations worldwide for various certifications (eg project management, software development, business transformation) in more than 200 countries.

2. Alexos Ltd (the Target) is a joint venture established in the United Kingdom, which was founded by the Cabinet (Cabinet Office) of the UK and Capita plc. The Target develops certification frameworks and related exams are marketed through an examination institute and a global network of Accredited Training Organizations (ATOs). The standards and methodologies developed and licensed by the Target are used worldwide by professionals working primarily in Information Services Management (ITSM) as well as Project and Program Management (PPM). ITSM certification frameworks allow end customers to certify skills related to the design, construction, delivery, operation and control of IT. PPM Certification frameworks allow end customers to certify processes, methods and technologies related to project management skills.

The concentration is based on an Agreement dated 20/06/2021 (hereinafter “Agreement”) between the Cabinet Office and Capita Business Services Ltd (both the Sellers) and Peoplecert International Limited (the Buyer). Based on this Agreement, Peoplecert International Limited will acquire the whole share capital of Axelos Ltd.

The Commission, taking into account the facts of the concentration, has concluded that this transaction constitutes a concentration within the meaning of section 6 (1)(a)(ii) of the Law, since it leads to a permanent change of control of the Target Company.

Furthermore, based on the information contained in the notification, the Commission found that the criteria set by section 3 (2) (a) of the Law were satisfied and therefore the notified concentration was of major importance falling within the scope of the Law.

The relevant product/services and geographic market in this case were defined as the market of a) licensing of certification frameworks (b) provision of examination services in the territory of the Republic of Cyprus.

Based on the notification, the concentration does not lead to a horizontal overlap between the activities of Alexos and Peoplecert in the market of provision of examination services to end customers. However, it leads to a horizontal overlap in the activities of the participating companies in Cyprus, in the certification framework licensing market where it includes all types of certifications, regardless of the expertise/skills required for the respective certification, e.g. different types of exam topics such as other IT skills, human resources, sales and marketing, healthcare etc. Nevertheless, their individual and combine market share is [0-5%]. Therefore, the Commission concluded that there is no affected market.

There is vertical relationship between the activities of licensing of certification frameworks by Axelos and the provision of provision of examination services to end customers by Peoplecert. However, Axelos estimates its market share in the relevant certification framework licensing market to be [0-5%], while PeopleCert estimates that its market share in the relevant market for testing services is [0-5%]. Therefore, the Commission concluded that there is no affected market.

The Commission, on the basis of the factual and legal circumstances, unanimously decided that this concentration does not create or strengthen a dominant position and therefore the concentration does not raise serious doubts as to its compatibility with the operation of the competition in the market.

Therefore, the Commission, acting in accordance with section 22 of the Law, unanimously decided not to oppose the notified concentration and declare it as being compatible with the operation of the competition in the market.

Loukia Christodoulou  
Chairperson of the  
Commission for the Protection of Competition