

PRESS RELEASE

The CNMC carries out a phase two analysis of the Quirón/Clínica Santa Cristina merger transaction

- It considers that the acquisition by Grupo QUIRÓN of 100% of the market for the private provision of healthcare services with admission to hospital in Albacete could pose risks to competition.
- In this phase, the CNMC will analyse the information requested from different companies in depth.

Madrid, 24 October 2018.- The CNMC (Spain's National Authority for Markets and Competition) on 11 October 2018 ordered the commencement of the phase two analysis of the Quirón/Clínica Santa Cristina merger. ([C/0966/18: Quirón/Clínica Santa Cristina](#))

The CNMC believes it is necessary to study the notified transaction in depth because of the possible obstacles there may be to maintaining competition in the market for the private provision of healthcare services with admission to hospital in the Albacete province.

The notified transaction consists of the acquisition by Helios Healthcare Spain S.L.U. (Grupo Quirón) of the healthcare business of Clínica Santa Cristina (CSC) in Albacete. In that province, there are only two private hospitals with inpatients: the one already owned by Quirón and the Clínica Santa Cristina, which is the subject of this transaction.

As a result of this acquisition, the only private hospital competitor in the Albacete province would disappear. Grupo Quirón would then have an unrivalled competitive position, just as the market test carried out by CNMC during the first phase analysis of the transaction confirmed.

Risks to competition

Additionally, the market power acquired in the provision of services with admission to hospital could strengthen the position of the resulting operator in the market for the provision of outpatient services. This situation could arise if patients preferred the whole medical process to be carried out continuously in the same centre.

In this context, CNMC has warned of the risk of unilateral conduct which could affect competition (e.g. a significant rise in prices and decrease in quality) on the part of the new operator, given its monopoly position in Albacete. This could significantly limit the negotiating power of the demand.

This risk is increased by the legal, economic and technical barriers to market access which would make it difficult to introduce new private hospitals in Albacete, at least in the short term.

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In-depth analysis

In view of the above, the CNMC has ordered a phase two analysis of the transaction. This step does not prejudice the definitive conclusions that the CNMC may reach regarding the Quirón/Clínica Santa Cristina merger transaction.

During the second phase, the CNMC will require more information from different operators in the affected markets. In addition, Grupo Quirón and interested third parties may submit arguments in defence of their legitimate interests.

The final decision approved by the CNMC may authorise, authorise subject to commitments, impose conditions on or prohibit the Quirón/Clínica Santa Cristina merger transaction.

[More information about the analysis of mergers by the CNMC](#)

[Summary C/0966/18: Quirón/Clínica Santa Cristina](#)

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