



GAZDASÁGI
VERSENYHIVATAL

Anti-limescale device lacking anti-limescale effects

The Hungarian Competition Authority (GVH) established in its decision that in the period between October 2007 and 31 August 2008 the practice of Oro-Team Bt was eligible for the deception of consumers, and between 1 September 2008 and 15 December 2008 it was engaged in unfair commercial practices against consumers. Oro-Team claimed that its product Vízkő-Ex Maxima had water-softening and anti-limescale effects, however, it was not able to prove these statements. The undertaking was fined HUF 500.000 (approx. EUR 1670) for the infringement.

The misleading information were published by Oro-Team in television ads, on its webpage, in leaflets and in the user manual of its product. It was explicitly stated that Vízkő-Ex Maxima softens water. According to the information published, Vízkő-Ex Maxima is an anti-limescale device, making water soft, dissolving lime-scale deposits and cleaning the whole water system from limescale. Oro-Team promised consumers that with the help of this product they can save detergent and energy, the water delivered through it is healthy to drink.

The proceeding of the GVH revealed that the undertaking could not prove the above mentioned statements. It is true that due to the activity of the device the shape and size of lime-scale crystals change, however, hard water does not turn softer this way. In the view of the GVH, it cannot be stated that water is healthy just because it contains potassium, calcium and magnesium compounds. The high concentration of the latter compounds may be good for people lacking them, but in the case of high blood pressure or kidney failure these compounds are certainly not healthy, and Vízkő-Ex Maxima will not clean the water from these substances.

Based on the above mentioned, the GVH prohibited Oro-Team to continue its misleading practice and imposed a fine of HUF 500.000 (approx. EUR 1670) on it for the infringement. When calculating the amount of the fine the GVH considered several mitigating circumstances. Among others, Oro-Team had acted in good faith when publishing the statements eligible for the deception of consumers and it co-operated with the GVH in the course of the proceeding. However, the practice of the undertaking lasted for a long time, which was deemed an aggravating circumstance.