

Prior notification of a concentration
(Case No COMP/M.3547 — BANCO SANTANDER/ABBHEY)

(2004/C 212/03)

(Text with EEA relevance)

1. On 13 August 2004, the Commission received a notification of a proposed concentration pursuant to Article 4 of Council Regulation (EC) No 139/2004 ⁽¹⁾ by which the undertaking Banco Santander Central Hispano, S.A ('Banco Santander', Spain), acquires within the meaning of Article 3(1)(b) of the Council Regulation control of the whole of the undertaking Abbey National plc ('Abbey', UK) by way of purchase of shares.

2. The business activities of the undertakings concerned are:

— For undertaking Banco Santander: corporate and retail banking services, financial services.

— For undertaking Abbey: corporate and retail banking services, financial services.

3. On preliminary examination, the Commission finds that the notified transaction could fall within the scope of Regulation (EC) No 139/2004. However, the final decision on this point is reserved.

4. The Commission invites interested third parties to submit their possible observations on the proposed operation to the Commission.

Observations must reach the Commission not later than 10 days following the date of this publication. Observations can be sent to the Commission by fax (fax No +32/2/2964301 or 2967244) or by post, under reference number COMP/M.3547 — BANCO SANTANDER/ABBHEY, to the following address:

European Commission
Directorate-General for Competition,
Merger Registry
J-70
B-1049 Bruxelles/Brussel

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 24, 29.1.2004, p. 1.