

Notification of an agreement**(Case No IV/36.442 — Inmarsat)**

(97/C 137/05)

(Text with EEA relevance)

1. On 14 March 1997, the Commission received a notification of an agreement pursuant to Article 4 of Council Regulation No 17 ⁽¹⁾. It concerns the restructuring of Inmarsat, the inter-governmental satellite organization, into a commercial entity. Inmarsat currently offers satellite services which are primarily used for maritime purposes, but also for aeronautical and land mobile communications. Inmarsat is the sole provider of satellite services which support the International Maritime Organization's global maritime distress and safety system (GMDSS). The new company will conduct all Inmarsat's future and existing business. A residual intergovernmental organization will remain, the sole purpose of which will be to oversee and enforce the company's provision of GMDSS services and the fulfilment of its other public service obligations. Currently, land earth station operators (LESOs) are represented on the Council of Inmarsat but following the restructuring the relationship will become more 'arm's length' and contractual.

The notification concerns the restructuring process and in particular the draft LESO agreement that the company will enter into with each existing LESO and will use as a template for similar agreements with other, newly authorized LESOs in the future.

2. On preliminary examination, the Commission finds that the notified agreement falls within the scope of Regulation No 17.

3. The Commission invites interested third parties to submit any observations on the proposed agreements. Third parties submitting observations should indicate clearly any business secrets which should be kept confidential.

Observations must reach the Commission not later than 10 days following the date of this publication. Observations may be sent by fax ((32-2) 296 70 81 or 296 98 19) or by post, quoting the reference number IV/36.442, to the following address:

European Commission,
Directorate-General for Competition (DG IV),
Directorate C,
Office 3/49,
Avenue de Cortenberg/Kortenberglaan 158,
B-1040 Brussels.

⁽¹⁾ OJ No 13, 21. 2. 1962, p. 204/62.