

PRESS RELEASE

The CNMC opens infringement proceedings against the Barcelona Bar Association (ICAB)

- It allegedly recommended once again prices in breach not only of the Law on Competition Defence (LDC), but also of two resolutions of the CNMC from 2018 and 2020.
- The ICAB and eight other Bar Associations have already penalised this practice.

Madrid, 27 September 2024 – The Spanish National Markets and Competition Commission (CNMC) has opened infringement proceedings against the Barcelona Bar Association (ICAB) for a possible breach of two Resolutions prohibiting price recommendations on lawyers' fees ([SNC/100/24 ICAB](#)).

In [March 2018](#), the CNMC penalised the ICAB and eight other Bar Associations for conduct prohibited by Article 1 of Law 15/2007 of 3 July on Competition Defence (LDC), consisting of making price recommendations by drafting, publishing and communicating fee scales([press release](#)).

In [February 2020](#), the CNMC issued a Resolution, as part of surveillance procedure [VS/0587/16](#) of the 2018 docket, which declared the guidance criteria on costs assessment submitted by the ICAB (November 2019) to be adequate to meet the commitments of the [2018 Resolution](#).

Initiation of infringement proceedings

In [May 2024](#), as part of the aforementioned [surveillance actions](#), the CNMC Council asked the Competition Directorate to open infringement proceedings against the ICAB due to indications of non-compliance.

Specifically, the ICAB allegedly communicated indicative criteria for the assessment of costs approved in the [2020 Resolution](#) to more than 4,000 lawyers of the ICAB, as well as to professionals from other territorial districts. These criteria converted the generic indications contained therein into specific percentages and, ultimately, into scales or lists of prices to be automatically applied.

The initiation of these proceedings in no way prejudices the final outcome of the investigation. The CNMC now has a time limit of three months to investigate and decide on the case.

Related content:

- [SNC/100/24 ICAB](#)
- [VS/0587/16: BANKIA COSTS.](#)
- [Resolution](#) of March 2018
- [Resolution](#) of February 2020
- [Press release](#) (12/03/2018): CNMC fines nine bar associations for making collective recommendations on legal fees
- [CNMCblog](#) (15/02/2024): The judgements of the CNMC sanctioning authority in the case of the proceedings against Bankia