

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-004716/25
to the Commission
Nikola Minchev (Renew)
(28 November 2025)**

Subject: Universal Music Group's intended acquisition of Downtown Music

Growth and competitiveness within Europe's cultural sectors are essential. Cultural industries in Europe rely heavily on micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, which contribute via innovation and diversity but are also the most susceptible to market concentration. The Commission cited concerns about market concentration in its justification for its decision last summer to launch a phase-two investigation into Universal Music Group's proposed acquisition of Downtown Music. The final decision of its investigation is expected on 6 February 2026.

This is a strategic case with a significant national interest and worldwide visibility. The issues it raises regarding the digital marketplace and the possible dangers extend beyond an individual merger. It addresses the future framework of Europe's music industry and the ability of European creators to prosper within that industry.

Therefore:

1. From a cultural policy perspective, how would cultural diversity be affected by any market concentration in the music sector?
2. How will the Commission ensure European music businesses, consumers and artists are able to enjoy a fair and diverse music market?
3. What is the Commission's long-term strategy to promote Europe's cultural industries, which are predominately made up of micro, small and medium-sized businesses?

Submitted: 28.11.2025

**Answer given by Mr Dombrovskis on behalf of the European Commission
(4 March 2026)**

In line with the Merger Regulation ⁽¹⁾, the Commission assesses the impact that a notified transaction has on effective competition. In the final decision adopted on 13 February 2026, the Commission concluded that the Universal Music Group (UMG) may gain access to commercially sensitive data on Downtown's software Curve and the remedies submitted by UMG fully address these concerns.

Based on evidence and feedback collected from many stakeholders during its investigation, the Commission concluded that the transaction does not raise other competition concerns.

In particular, the investigation confirmed the existence of various competitors, including Sony, Warner, Believe and other independents. The press release is available on the Commission's website ⁽²⁾.

On 12 November 2025, the Commission adopted a communication on a new Culture Compass for Europe (COM(2025) 785 final) that sets out a strategic vision and recognises the need to address the pressing challenges facing the cultural and creative sectors.

Among the key priorities, it aims at empowering artists and cultural professionals and leveraging Europe's culture and cultural heritage to enhance competitiveness, resilience and social cohesion.

The Compass also identifies concrete flagship actions supporting cultural and creative professionals, such as developing an EU Artist Charter and an AI strategy for the cultural and creative sectors.

The Commission has also invited the European Parliament and the Council to consider agreeing and co-signing a Joint Declaration (COM(2025) 786 final) that aims to strengthen the political commitment to support Europe's cultural and creative sectors and industries, as an integral part of the EU's identity and development.

⁽¹⁾ Council Regulation (EC) No 139/2004 of 20 January 2004 on the control of concentrations between undertakings, OJ L 24, 29.1.2004, pp. 1-22.

⁽²⁾ <https://competition-cases.ec.europa.eu/cases/M.11956>.