

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-002093/24
to the Commission
Christine Anderson (ESN)
(16 October 2024)**

Subject: Possible distortions of competition in Formula 1 team entries

The fact that the Formula One Group (FOG) rejected Andretti's entry into Formula 1, despite the team having FIA approval, could indicate a fundamental conflict of interest. Existing teams may be forming a de facto cartel that systematically excludes new competitors to protect their revenues and market values. This practice could significantly distort competition in the European motor sport industry.

The case of the Williams team illustrates the issue, as financial difficulties during the COVID-19 crisis meant that the long-established company had to be sold, with the Williams family having to give up all its shares. The high team values resulting from market foreclosure make it practically impossible for innovative private entrepreneurs such as Eddie Jordan or Ross Brawn to enter into Formula 1 or take over existing teams.

This situation has direct implications on the internal market, as many Formula 1 teams are based in the EU.

1. Given this problematic set-up, what is the Commission's assessment of the cartel-like structures in Formula 1, which hinder the entry of new teams and lead to a concentration of team owners among large investors?
2. What measures is the Commission considering to ensure a fairer and more transparent process for the entry of new teams into Formula 1 and a wide range of team owners?
3. Is the Commission planning to investigate the impact of these entry barriers and the resulting market concentration on innovation, jobs and the competitiveness of the motor sport and automotive sector in the EU?

Submitted: 16.10.2024

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Vestager on behalf of the European Commission
(15 November 2024)**

Based on the limited information available to the Commission on the topic of alleged barriers to entry to Formula 1 for new teams, the Commission cannot assess whether such barriers to entry are the result of anticompetitive conduct in breach of Article 101 and/or Article 102 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU.

As such, the Commission is currently not considering any measures, nor is it planning to investigate the impact of the alleged barriers on innovation, jobs and the competitiveness of the motor sport and automotive sector in the EU.

However, the Commission stands ready to review any evidence of anticompetitive conduct that interested parties may bring to its attention.
