Collusion in the purchase of soft fruit? President of UOKiK brings charges

* **Did businesses purchasing soft fruit in the Wielkopolska** **region unlawfully fix prices? The President of UOKiK has brought charges against five companies and one individual managing a company.**

**Local farmers and orchard owners may have been selling their produce at reduced prices for three years.**

* **The Authority also carried out inspections at large processors and their cooperating purchasing centres. The results are currently under review.**

**[Warsaw, 29 September 2025]** The President of UOKiK is monitoring the soft fruit market. One of the investigations concerns entities operating purchasing centres for, among others, currants, cherries, and plums in the Wielkopolska region. UOKiK has obtained evidence, among others, during a search of the premises of one of the companies, that entrepreneurs exchanged information about prices and then applied those prices to suppliers at their purchasing centres. The agreement may have been in place between 2022 and 2024. The proceedings have been initiated against the following companies: Fructis of Wierzbie (Wielkopolskie), Damex of Nowa Wieś (Wielkopolskie), Silver-Trans of Sompolno (Wielkopolskie), Kam-Pol of Biała Rawska (Łódzkie), and Kalbrok of Sielice (Mazowieckie). Charges were also brought against a manager at Fructis.

“In practice, the suspected agreement could have meant that local farmers were forced to sell currants or cherries at artificially low prices for three soft fruit harvest seasons”, says President of UOKiK Tomasz Chróstny.

We remind entrepreneurs that they must set their prices independently based on their own economic calculation. Although price imitation, i.e. observing the prices of other entities and creating one’s own offer accordingly, is permitted, it is prohibited to agree and coordinate prices with competitors. Such action constitutes price fixing, which is prohibited by law.

“We have been observing the fruit market for many years. Our analyses show that purchasing centres usually align their prices with the rates set by larger processing plants. Therefore, low or even identical rates at several locations do not automatically mean that price collusion has taken place. What is prohibited are agreements that fix prices, i.e. joint and coordinated actions by independent businesses”, adds President of UOKiK Tomasz Chróstny.

An enterprise involved in a competition-restricting agreement faces a fine of up to 10% of its turnover. Individuals responsible for entering into a price-fixing agreement face a fine of up to PLN 2 million.

Recently, in addition to the initiated proceedings, the Authority has also carried out inspections at three major processors: Austria Juice Poland, Döhler, and Rauch Polska, as well as at three entities with purchasing centres: Przetwórstwo Owoców i Warzyw Anna Wagnerowska, Makofrost (both from Opole Lubelskie), and Frutica of Lewiczyn. We are verifying whether price fixing may have occurred at any level of trade under examination. The evidence collected in the course of preliminary investigation is currently being analysed to determine whether an illegal agreement may have been concluded. These proceedings are conducted *in rem*, not against any specific entrepreneurs.

Severe penalties for participation in collusion can be avoided through the [leniency scheme](https://konkurencja.uokik.gov.pl/program-lagodzenia-kar/). It offers businesses involved in an illegal agreement and managers responsible for entering into a collusion arrangement an opportunity to reduce a sanction or, in some cases, avoid it altogether. It is intended for those who agree to cooperate with the President of UOKiK as a “crown witness” and provide evidence or information regarding the existence of a prohibited agreement. We encourage those interested in the leniency scheme to contact the Authority at a dedicated phone number: 22 55 60 555. UOKiK staff will answer any questions about the leniency scheme, including anonymous inquiries.

We also remind you that we operate a programme for obtaining information from anonymous whistleblowers. Do you wish to inform UOKiK about competition restricting practices? Visit <https://uokik.whiblo.pl/> or scan the QR code below and use the simple form. The system we use guarantees complete anonymity, including from UOKiK itself.