

PRESS RELEASE

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The Belgian Competition Authority suspends the technical standard of the International Cycling Union limiting the maximum gear ratio allowed in professional road cycling events

On 9 October 2025, the Belgian Competition Authority ("BCA") decided to impose interim measures aimed at suspending the technical standard adopted by the International Cycling Union ("UCI") limiting the maximum gear ratio allowed in professional road cycling events to a transmission ratio of 54x11 ("Maximum Gear Ratio Standard").

The BCA recognises the legitimacy and importance for a sports regulator such as the UCI to ensure the safety of athletes. However, the procedures for determining technical standards enacted for this purpose, as well as the related tests, must meet essential conditions of proportionality, objectivity, transparency and non-discrimination in view of the economic consequences of these standards. They cannot result in an undue restriction of competition between sports equipment suppliers. The BCA considers *prima facie* that the Maximum Gear Ratio Standard and the procedures governing its adoption by the UCI do not meet the required conditions of objectivity and transparency. The standard further generates disproportionate negative effects on a sports equipment supplier, namely SRAM.

SRAM is one of the two main suppliers of transmission systems for road bikes used by professional riders and the only one that does not currently have a product meeting the requirements of the Maximum Gear Ratio Standard. The standard, adopted under disputable conditions, is likely to cause harm to SRAM that is serious and difficult to repair, thereby justifying its suspension. The harm also extends to professional cycling teams equipped with SRAM transmission systems. Furthermore, the urgency of adopting interim measures is motivated by the first application of the Maximum Gear Ratio Standard during the Tour of Guangxi in China, starting on 14 October 2025, which closes the UCI World Tour calendar for this season.

Consequently, on a conservatory basis, the BCA has decided:

- To require the UCI to suspend immediately, and no later than 13 October, the implementation of the Maximum Gear Ratio Standard;
- To prohibit the UCI from imposing transmission ratio limitations or taking any other measure having the direct or indirect effect of prohibiting the use of certain types of transmission systems in any professional road cycling event governed by the UCI, either until the UCI adopts a new safety measure based on a transparent, objective and non-discriminatory procedure, or until a decision on the merits is adopted;
- To require the UCI to publish, within 24 hours following the date of notification of the decision, a press release indicating that the Maximum Gear Ratio Standard is not applicable and referring to the BCA's decision.

The implementation of the interim measures adopted today will be monitored by the BCA's Investigation and Prosecution Service. In the event of non-compliance, the imposition of penalty payments may be requested from the BCA's Competition College, which will also arbitrate disputes concerning the interpretation of its decision. The decision will soon be published on the website of the BCA.

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The Belgian Competition Authority (BCA) is an independent administrative authority that contributes to the definition and implementation of competition policy in Belgium. Concretely, the BCA pursues anti-competitive practices, such as cartels and abuses of a dominant position, and reviews the main merger operations. The BCA cooperates with the other competition authorities of the member states of the European Union and the European Commission within the European Competition Network (ECN)