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Brau Union Faces Austrian Antitrust Ruling No Earlier Than 2027

Settlement talks with Austria’s competition authority could avert a prolonged case over alleged abuse of market dominance

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Brau Union, the Heineken-owned brewer, is unlikely to receive a final decision in its Austrian antitrust case before 2027 if settlement talks with regulators do not produce an agreement.

The case concerns allegations that Brau Union abused a dominant market position in Austria. According to Brauwelt International, one final witness hearing is scheduled for November 26. Austrian media, cited by the trade publication, said Brau Union and Austria’s Federal Competition Authority, or BWB, have been in settlement talks since late summer.

If those talks fail, a ruling in 2027 is becoming increasingly likely, according to the report. No settlement has been announced, and no further details were given on the terms under discussion or on how close the sides may be to an agreement.

The timing matters because the November 26 hearing appears to be the last remaining witness session in the case. That leaves two possible paths: a negotiated outcome between the brewer and the authority, or a formal ruling at a later stage. Either route could carry consequences beyond the companies directly involved, because competition cases involving a major beer producer can affect how the market operates.

Brau Union is Heineken’s Austrian unit, and the proceeding has drawn attention in the brewing industry because it centers on alleged market dominance. A settlement could resolve the dispute without waiting for a court decision in 2027. If there is no agreement, the case would remain open longer and the legal uncertainty would continue for the company, its trading partners and competitors.

The dispute also has broader implications for the beverage business in Austria. Any settlement or eventual ruling could help define the limits of commercial conduct for large brewers and could influence access to the market for smaller beer companies and distributors. That makes the case important not only for Brau Union and Heineken, but also for other businesses that sell, distribute or compete in the Austrian drinks market.

For now, the immediate focus is on November 26, when the final witness hearing is due to take place. After that, attention will turn to whether the settlement discussions with the BWB can produce a deal. If they do not, the case is expected to move toward a decision in 2027.