



Department of Justice

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INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION NETWORK PRESENTS VISION FOR ITS SECOND DECADE

Department of Justice Antitrust Officials Promote Competition, Cooperation and Agency Effectiveness in International Forum

WASHINGTON – At its 10th annual conference in The Hague, the Netherlands, the International Competition Network (ICN) adopted new materials on how to assess market dominance, resolve cartel cases and manage competition projects effectively, the Department of Justice announced today. The organization also presented a comprehensive evaluation of how competition agencies use the ICN's merger-related materials, and unveiled the first four teaching modules of a "virtual university" of competition law and practice.

The ICN conference, hosted by the Netherlands Competition Authority, was held on May 18-20, 2011. Almost 500 delegates participated, representing over 90 jurisdictions from around the world, and included competition experts from international organizations and the legal, business, consumer and academic communities. Officials from the Department of Justice Antitrust Division and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) led the U.S. delegates at the conference. The conference showcased the accomplishments of ICN working groups on mergers, unilateral conduct, cartels, competition advocacy and competition agency effectiveness.

"As we celebrate the 10th anniversary of the ICN this year, it is important to recognize how much our international cooperation and coordination efforts have enhanced antitrust enforcement worldwide," said Assistant Attorney General Christine Varney of the Department of Justice's Antitrust Division. "By working cooperatively on cases when possible and by sharing best practices we can continue to promote effective antitrust enforcement and competition globally."

The ICN's Merger Working Group aims to promote best practices in the design and operation of merger review regimes. Co-chaired by the Department of Justice and the Irish Competition Authority, the working group presented a comprehensive assessment of the use and impact of 10 years of ICN work on mergers and an evaluation of new work areas to help make merger review more effective. Rachel Brandenburger, Special Advisor, International to Assistant Attorney General Varney, led the conference discussion of current trends and developments in merger enforcement.

The Cartel Working Group produced a paper on cartel case resolution methods and compiled submissions from more than 60 member agencies to add to the world's largest collection of cartel awareness and outreach materials. Belinda Barnett, Criminal Deputy General Counsel of the Department of Justice's Antitrust Division, participated in a panel discussion on cartel enforcement awareness and outreach.

The conference highlighted the work of the Agency Effectiveness Working Group, which is developing a competition agency manual as a resource to enhance agencies' effectiveness and efficiency. FTC Chairman Leibowitz presented opening remarks and participated in a panel discussion on the effective management of competition agencies. New materials were presented on such topics as project delivery and knowledge management.

"Sharing views and techniques with our foreign counterparts allows us all to identify best practices to apply in our home jurisdictions," Chairman Leibowitz said. "As it enters its second decade, the ICN continues to build on the momentum and successes of its first 10 years. This year's conference again demonstrated how the ICN serves as a critical platform for enhancing the effectiveness of competition agencies and maximizing our ability to act as effective consumer champions."

The conference also showcased the ICN Curriculum Project, a project led by FTC Commissioner and ICN Vice Chairman Kovacic to create a "virtual university" of training materials on competition law and practice. The materials include video lectures and other resources gathered into an online interactive educational center.

Other developments included the work of the Unilateral Conduct Working Group, which promotes convergence and sound enforcement of laws governing conduct by firms with market power. Co-chaired by the FTC and Germany's competition authority, the Bundeskartellamt, the working group drafted the initial section of a "workbook" for agency investigators on determining market dominance and substantial market power. Randolph W. Tritell, Director of the FTC's Office of International Affairs, presented opening remarks for a session on the competitive analysis of loyalty discounts and rebate programs.

The Advocacy Working Group prepared a competition advocacy toolkit with an overview of the advocacy process and guidance tools for agencies, and presented the results of evaluating its existing work on conducting market studies. In addition, the Netherlands Competition Authority, the conference's host agency, conducted a panel and presented a report on the role of consumer welfare in competition enforcement.

The ICN was created in October 2001, when the DOJ and FTC joined antitrust agencies from 13 other jurisdictions to increase understanding of competition policy and promote convergence toward best practices around the world. The ICN now includes 117 member agencies from 103 jurisdictions.

ICN documents are available at www.internationalcompetitionnetwork.org.

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