



Department of Justice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MONDAY, JUNE 13, 1994

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**ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO UNVEILS NEW PROPOSAL TO STRENGTHEN
INTERNATIONAL ANTITRUST EFFORTS**

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Attorney General Janet Reno today announced a legislative proposal that will help the United States obtain evidence from foreign countries for antitrust investigations in an age of global commerce.

The legislation, the International Antitrust Enforcement Act of 1994, was drafted by the Antitrust Division of the Department of Justice and will be introduced next week by Senator Howard Metzenbaum in the Senate, and Chairman Jack Brooks in the House.

"We welcome this invigoration of antitrust enforcement," the Attorney General said. "As more countries utilize laws to preserve competition and to stamp out cartels, the playing field is leveled and U.S. consumers and industries are the beneficiaries. Unfortunately, our antitrust enforcement tools have not kept pace with the internationalization of the marketplace."

The new legislation would enable the Justice Department and the Federal Trade Commission to obtain evidence from foreign

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antitrust agencies by authorizing the U.S. antitrust agencies to provide reciprocal assistance where it is in the public interest to do so and where foreign authorities will treat the information with the same confidentiality as the U.S. agencies.

The legislation would also enable U.S. investigators to obtain information from foreign countries and persons within their jurisdictions in appropriate circumstances. Assistance would be available in both civil and criminal antitrust investigations and cases. Its use would be similar to the mutual legal assistance treaties that are negotiated and implemented by the Criminal Division, and to the arrangements that have been negotiated by our securities and tax law enforcement agencies.

Transnational conduct is growing in volume and importance as a focus of the Antitrust Division's enforcement activities, the Attorney General noted. International cartels, transnational mergers with anticompetitive potential, price fixing among U.S. firms at the direction of their foreign parent companies and collusion among foreign firms to keep U.S. companies out of their markets, are key elements of the division's enforcement efforts.

"This legislation would give us unprecedented access to evidence needed to conduct investigations of international business activity. In exchange, U.S. laws would be re-tooled to accommodate similar requests from foreign countries," said Reno.

The proposal would authorize the Justice Department to assist foreign antitrust authorities to obtain evidence in this

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country by issuing civil investigative demands to a person in the United States, or seeking a court's assistance in obtaining evidence.

It would also authorize the Department or the FTC to disclose to a foreign antitrust authority antitrust investigative information that is otherwise confidential under the Antitrust Civil Process Act of the Hart-Scott-Rodino Antitrust Act and permit the Department, subject to court approval, to disclose grand jury information to a foreign antitrust authority.

"Vigorous enforcement of our antitrust laws is critical to American consumers and businesses," the Attorney General said. "By preserving competition in the marketplace, the antitrust laws for over a century have given consumers more choices, better products, and lower prices than consumers anyplace in the world.

"They have kept American business tough and efficient and the equal or better of businesses around the globe."

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