



U. S. Department of Justice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 1994

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**ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL ANNE K. BINGAMAN'S STATEMENT
UPON THE PRESIDENT'S SIGNING OF THE INTERNATIONAL
ANTITRUST ENFORCEMENT ASSISTANCE ACT**

The International Antitrust Enforcement Assistance Act will allow the Department of Justice and the Federal Trade Commission to cooperate with foreign antitrust authorities in international antitrust enforcement, under agreements authorized by the Act.

The Department and the FTC have immediately begun to implement the law by agreeing to enter into exploratory discussions with the Canadian government, for the purpose of developing an agreement allowing both countries to share and obtain otherwise confidential civil investigative information and evidence involving antitrust investigations.

This Act is an important step in allowing U.S. antitrust authorities to build upon our strong relationship with the Canadian government. If an agreement with Canada is concluded, it will allow us to cooperate and exchange confidential information in civil antitrust investigations and prosecutions, just as we now do under our Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty with Canada for criminal matters. Under the MLAT, we have

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successfully conducted our joint fax paper and plastic dinnerware investigations and prosecutions with the Canadian antitrust authorities. We expect to meet with Canadian officials over the next few months to develop an agreement that will enable both countries to further strengthen the enforcement of their respective antitrust laws. The agreement would be similar to a mutual legal assistance treaty.

This Act also will allow the U.S. agencies to negotiate agreements with other appropriate foreign antitrust authorities to exchange confidential information, with necessary safeguards, in both criminal and civil matters.

In the age of global commerce, international cartels and transnational anticompetitive conduct that injure our consumers and U.S. competitors are key targets of the Antitrust Division's enforcement program. Until now, the most significant obstacle to our international enforcement efforts has been our limited ability to get information and documents from outside the United States in order to build a case that will stand up in court.

The new law has given the Division the firepower we need to obtain the evidence abroad necessary to crack down on international cartels, price fixing among U.S. firms at the direction of their foreign parent companies and collusion among foreign firms that significantly affects U.S. foreign and export commerce.

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It will enable the Department and the Federal Trade Commission to obtain evidence from foreign 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.

I believe we will see an increase in the amount of international cases brought by the Antitrust Division as a result of this law, which gives us the necessary tools to enforce our antitrust laws against international cartels which harm American consumers and businesses.

In the upcoming months, the Department of Justice and the Federal Trade Commission, will begin discussions with other foreign countries to develop and conclude additional agreements under the new law.

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