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Chairman ICN Steering Group
President Federal Cartel Office

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Note from the Chair for the Steering Group Meeting on 17 March 2021

Dear Colleagues,

Although October is still well ahead, we will start our meeting with a discussion on the general format of the 2021 ICN Annual Conference. The COVID-19 pandemic has a tight grip on many countries and we are not as advanced with regard to vaccination as expected. The risk of mutations increases the uncertainty which makes it difficult to plan an international conference. Our Hungarian colleagues are under time pressure as they have organized a wonderful conference and made commitments. If the format needs to be adapted, this has to be done by the beginning of April. In such a situation of uncertainty the ultimate decision rests with the host. However, as the Steering Group we would like to offer our advice and support. It is an opportunity for the network to prove our flexibility to adapt to a new and changing situation. In view of this we could explore our options, including a smaller in-person event, a full virtual conference or a combination of both as a hybrid format, before taking a final view.

I will then briefly bring you up to date on the 2022 Annual Conference.

The ICN workshops are also affected by the pandemic. The Merger Working Group will report on the virtual event and we will hear from the Cartel Working Group and the Advocacy Working Group on the current status of their considerations.

We will then turn to the Unilateral Conduct Working Group and hear about the dominance in the digital era project.

Third Decade (3D) organized a first member agency meeting in February which focused on evaluating the member survey responses relating to the questions on agency and NGA participation. The Operational Framework Working Group which is leading one of the focal areas of the project has also started a series of meetings. We will hear more next Wednesday.

The Steering Group project on Competition law enforcement at the intersection of competition, consumer protection, and privacy is organizing a second webinar to identify more challenging issues and has invited inter alia the Deputy Commissioner, Compliance, Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada to add a new perspective.

In this time of virtual events, the ICN calendar is becoming even more important. The ICN Secretariat is in contact with the ICN website providers in order to further improve the calendar function on the website. Triggered by an overlap of events, our OECD Liaison has taken on this topic and coordinated procedures with the OECD. In the future, the ICN Horizontal Coordinator will include the main OECD events in its internal calendar, and vice versa, the OECD Liaison will keep the OECD informed. In this context, the OECD has proposed to include the main events in each other's official calendar published on the websites. We will explore together whether this form of teamwork could offer added value for members.

Finally, the ICN Secretariat will report on the ICN Special Purpose Account.

I look forward to speaking with you next Wednesday.

With best regards,

Andreas Mundt