

ICN Steering Group Meeting
Thursday, March 14, 2013
6:00 am (Mexico City) / 8:00 am (Ottawa) / 1:00 pm (Brussels)

Attendees

Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
Brazilian Administrative Council for Economic Defense
Competition Bureau Canada
European Commission DG Competition
French Autorité de la concurrence
German Bundeskartellamt
Japan Fair Trade Commission
Italian Autorità Garante della Concorrenza e del Mercato
Korea Fair Trade Commission
Mexico Federal Competition Commission
Moroccan Conseil de la Concurrence
Netherlands Competition Authority
Polish Office of Competition and Consumer Protection
Russian Federal Antimonopoly Service
Comision Nacional de la Competencia
Turkish Competition Authority
United Kingdom Office of Fair Trading
United States Department of Justice
United States Federal Trade Commission

The Chair welcomed Spain's Comision Nacional de la Competencia, who joined the meeting to present its proposal for a project on Corporate Social Responsibility.

The Chair noted that the Secretariat had not received additional candidates for Steering Group chair and reiterated his interest in continuing to serve as Steering Group Chair.

Item 1. Approval of Agenda and Minutes

The Steering Group approved the proposed agenda and minutes of the February 27 meeting, subject to any comments submitted to the Secretariat by Tuesday, March 19.

Item 2. Work Plans

The Horizontal Coordinator and Vice Chair Andreas Mundt led a discussion on Working Groups' three-year work plans.

The HC presented its *Report to Working Group Chairs - Horizontal Coordinator Review of Work Plans*, which outlines an estimated 32 work products organized by types of work

product and topics proposed under each work plan. The report highlights in an appendix work product relating to either cooperation or implementation. The Horizontal Coordinator noted there were no conflicts among the plans. All groups intend to build on existing work products, use past work products as a basis for creating new work and undertake a number of completely new products. Most groups are planning to prepare at least one of each of the five types of work products (workshops, reports and handbooks, web-related products, teleseminars and webinars, and surveys). The Horizontal Coordinator commented that work plans could benefit from a clear articulation of ways in which Working Group goals will be achieved through the proposed work products and how the effectiveness of each project will be evaluated.

Vice Chair Mundt was pleased with the increased focus on implementation and cooperation and the substance of the proposed work product planned, but expressed concern with the number of projects contemplated and workload issues. He suggested that while the Steering Group should not select or eliminate certain projects, the Steering Group should urge the Working Group chairs to reconsider the number of projects planned for the next year and consider whether one or more projects may be postponed.

A number of Steering Group members supported Vice Chair Mundt's proposal, suggesting working groups prioritize cooperation projects and that longer term plans could be more ambitious in this area. Another suggestion was to rely more on seminars and webinars rather than travel to in-person workshops.

Other members commented that the nature of the work product is more important than the number and about half (~16) of the 32 are extension of current projects or implementation efforts of existing work. These 16 do not represent new efforts, and may be the answer to the perceived "increase" in workload numbers over the past several years.

The Chair asked Working Groups to review their work plans and consider workload, taking into account implementation efforts, work on cooperation, and development of recommended practices.

Item 3. CSR Project Proposal

The Spanish competition agency, the CNC, presented an idea for a future ICN project related to Corporate Social Responsibility indices. The proposal is to explore whether it is appropriate and useful for CSR indices take competition violations into consideration when evaluating companies and whether CSR might be an additional tool to increase the consequences of violating competition laws. Several speakers noted that the topic is of interest, and appropriate for a discussion of future work within the AWG, particularly within the context of discussions on building a competition culture within a jurisdiction. Some speakers stated that the proposal may be premature: that the relationship

between competition and CSR may need more detailed explanation as well as the articulation of what types of competition violations may be best suited for such discussion. Concerns were raised about the appropriateness of a discussion that goes beyond the established statutory range of sanctions for agencies into moral aspects debated by CSR indices and whether a clear message on competition compliance might get lost among more broadly debated social concerns. The discussion also included practical concerns about adding a new topic to the ICN's current workload and that any discussion of CSR might, for some members, necessitate inclusion of other, non-competition ministries. The discussion concluded that the proposal had very interesting ideas but that the scope should be reconsidered, and that the AWG is a suitable venue for initial consideration for future work.

Item 4. 2013 Annual Conference

The UOKiK reported its progress in developing the agenda for next month's annual conference and each Working Group briefly previewed its expected work product for consideration and approval by the Steering Group in April.

Item 5. Membership

The Membership Working Group postponed its discussion of the application of the Eurasian Economic Commission pending additional information.

Item 6. 2015 Conference Host

Three members have expressed interest in hosting the 2015 ICN Annual Conference: member agencies from Australia, India, and Kazakhstan. Steering Group members were asked to consider the materials provided by each of the three candidates in light of the host criteria and contact the Secretariat with their preference by March 22.

Item 7. Other Business

There was no other business discussed.

Item 8. Future Meetings of the Steering Group

The next SG meeting will take place on Wednesday, April 10, 2013.