

Competition law also has to adapt to the complex challenges of the 21st century - expressed at the III. Hungarian Competition Law Forum

The current hot topics of competition law were once again discussed in this year's Competition Law Forum, which was jointly organised by The Gazdasági Versenyhivatal (the Hungarian Competition Authority, GVH) and the Hungarian Competition Law Association.

Miklós Juhász, the President of the Hungarian Competition Authority (Gazdasági Versenyhivatal – GVH), stated in his opening speech to the participants of the III. Hungarian Competition Law Forum that the rapid spread of digitalisation in the economy, the strengthening of oligopolistic market structures and procedural efficiency are all issues that inevitably need to be addressed in competition policy today. The president reviewed the main areas of the GVH's competition law enforcement: he drew attention to the ongoing market analysis in the market of digital comparison tools as part of the GVH's mid-term digital strategy, as well as to the latest notice on fining “which grants a wide margin of discretion to the Competition Council, the decision making body of the GVH, to take into account the willingness of undertakings to comply or compensate/redeem”.

In his speech, **Zoltán Hegymegi-Barakonyi, the President of the Hungarian Competition Law Association,** emphasised that technological changes, for instance the incorporation of artificial intelligence into business models, may require a paradigm shift in competition law. In connection with the recent decision of the EU Commission in the Siemens/Alstom case, he commented that “it might be necessary to fundamentally rethink the rules relating to concentrations” in order to promote the success of European undertakings against China and the United States in global market competition.

Pál Csiszár, director of the Directorate-General for Competition of the European Commission, and guest of honour of the event, took the position that easing merger control is “not the right cure for this disease”. According to him it is very important that European competitiveness, especially innovation is boosted, but not at the expense of European consumers, in the specific case in question by increasing the price of rail travel. The director also warned against the dangers of the strengthening of oligopolistic markets, as experiences show that there have been fewer and fewer market entries over the last 15 years. Then again, smaller number of market participants can easily coordinate their behaviours, which cannot be remedied by competition law in certain cases. In addition, maintaining the fourth industrial revolution and procedural efficiency are challenges that competition authorities must face in order to preserve competitive market operation.

László Bak, the Vice President of the GVH, stated in his presentation on the ECN+ Directive, which aims to strengthen the national competition authorities of the European Union, that the vast majority of domestic legislation already complies with the provisions

of the Directive. Only certain detailed rules need to be introduced in order to achieve full conformity. This means that the GVH already possesses all of the vital instruments and powers that are necessary to effectively enforce competition law.

Panel discussions provided a detailed overview of the competition concerns raised by the growing digital economy that affect us all, the appropriateness and effectiveness of competition law sanctions, as well as the increasingly strict intervention of the competition authority in merger control to the judges, lawyers, and company lawyers who participated in the forum.

The professional programme of the conference was closed by **Gábor Faludi**. His presentation was dedicated to the **Hungarian implementation of the European Union's directive on trade secrets**.

The presentations of the III. Hungarian Competition Law Forum will be available on the [website](#) of the GVH from 24 May.

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