

For Official Use

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Organisation de Coopération et de Développement Economiques
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

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English - Or. English

ROUNDTABLE ON COMMUNICATION BY COMPETITION AUTHORITIES

Note by the United States

1. Office of Public Affairs

1. The FTC's Office of Public Affairs (OPA) is located at the Commission's Headquarters in Washington, D.C., and is staffed by a director, deputy director, four full-time public affairs specialists, a public affairs assistant, and two student interns. The primary goal of the OPA is to secure accurate and comprehensive coverage of FTC initiatives on both the national and regional level.

2. The work of the FTC'

3. Target Audiences/Stakeholders

held at Headquarters; for less significant announcements that are still important to a specific sector of the economy, less formal, roundtable-like events called “media availability’s” are held. At both press conferences and media availability’s, conference call-in lines are made available for reporters who are unable to attend. While these press events are open to the public, only members of the media may ask questions. Senior FTC officials may take questions from the media following speeches, at seminars, during workshop breaks, or after giving Congressional testimony, at their discretion. Antitrust reports, advocacies, and staff comments are posted on the Commission’s Web site in PDF format, along with a press release summarising them.

5. The Role of Public Opinion and Public Debate

12. All mergers, acquisitions, and other antitrust matters in which the Commission takes law enforcement action are subject to public comment. Therefore, the announcement of such actions is essential, as is their coverage by the media, to ensure that the public is aware of the decision and can provide informed comments if they desire. The Commission considers and responds to all public comments. These comments may lead to altering the terms of a proposed consent order prior to its finalisation, or influencing the Commission’s decision regarding a proposed divestiture or order modification.

13. Similarly, comments and feedback provided during or following a publicised antitrust workshop

reasons for the decision, favourable citation to FTC documents in the written decision is an obvious indicator of success.

- (2) "Repeat business:" This occurs when a policymaker we advise returns to us for advice on another issue, or when other policymakers consult our advocacy documents or seek our input because they see that we have already given advice on that topic. Perhaps the best recent examples of this are FTC staff letters assessing state legislation purporting to create antitrust exemptions for physician collective bargaining; several different states have asked FTC staff for its views over the past several years, often noting our previous advocacy letters on this topic.
- (3) Web hits on competition advocacy materials help us assess the extent to which policymakers, the news media, and others find our advocacy materials useful.
- (4) Media coverage, and direct feedback from officials and interested parties in response to the media coverage, also help us assess the extent to which our advocacy projects are having their intended effect.

ANNEX

OECD Roundtable on Media Relations - DOJ Submission

22. The Department of Justice's Media Relations Policy (U.S. Attorneys' Manual, 1-7.000 (available at http://10.173.2.10/usao/eousa/foia_reading_room/usam/title1/7m DOJ.htm), and governs dissemination of information related to DOJ antitrust enforcement. Overall, the Department's approach with regard to communication is to balance three principal interests: the right of the public to be informed, the right of an individual to a fair trial, and the government's ability effectively to enforce the administration of justice. (1-7.110).

conferences. Individuals from the Department frequently participate in panel discussions on competition policy; other panellists at these discussions typically include legal practitioners, economists and academics. Another important method of disseminating the Department's views regarding competition policy is through public testimony and speeches, and through advocacy work at all levels of government.