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Competition and Regional Economic Organizations

Contribution

The Eurasian Economic Commission

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The Eurasian Economic Commission
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In recent years, there has been an **increased emphasis on the role of regional organizations** in the world. These organizations have gained importance due to several factors, including globalization, the need for regional stability, and the pursuit of regional economic integration.

Regional organizations play a crucial role in fostering economic integration among member states. By promoting trade liberalization, removing barriers to the movement of goods, services, and capital, and harmonizing regulations, these organizations facilitate regional economic cooperation.

Considering the growing importance of regional organizations, the need for regional competition policy becomes evident:

First, regional competition policy helps create a level playing field for businesses operating within the region. By preventing anti-competitive behavior such as price-fixing, collusion, and abuse of market dominance, it encourages businesses to compete fairly. This leads to increased efficiency, innovation, and productivity, benefiting both consumers and economies.

Second, it facilitates regional economic integration: a robust competition policy within a region fosters economic integration by harmonizing competition laws and regulations among member states. This helps eliminate disparities and ensures consistent competition standards, promoting a fair and transparent business environment. It also reduces barriers to trade and investment within the region.

Third, it protects consumer interests: regional competition policy safeguards the interests of consumers by preventing anti-competitive practices that could lead to higher prices, reduced choice, and lower quality goods and services. It promotes consumer welfare by encouraging competition and preventing market distortions caused by monopolistic or collusive behavior.

And forth, it enhances regional competitiveness: a well-designed regional competition policy framework can enhance the competitiveness of the region as a whole. It encourages innovation, attracts investment, and fosters a business-friendly environment. By promoting competition, it encourages companies to strive for efficiency, productivity, and quality improvements, which ultimately drives regional economic growth.

Different aspects of competition regulation are discussed in detail on different international forums such as UNCTAD, OECD, ICN and others, numerous conferences and seminars. But the specifics of supranational or regional competition regulation and law enforcement, in our view, have been given relatively little attention.

At the same time, regional competition regulation and enforcement may require independent approaches different from the national ones.

Bearing in mind all the above, the Eurasian Economic Commission with the kind help and support of the UNCTAD Branch on Competition and Consumer Protection launched an initiative to bring together representatives of regional organizations having supranational competences in the field of competition.

During the past two meetings the regional organizations have got acquainted with each other and shared our experiences and practices on various aspects of regional regulation, including:

- the scope of powers of regional organizations;
- distribution of powers between regional and national competition authorities;
- interaction between regional and national competition authorities, including information exchange;
- regional competition advocacy initiatives;
- mechanisms and the procedure of interaction in the process of competition case consideration and novelties in competition regulation.

The regional organizations meetings enable the participants to exchange experiences, share best practices, and collaborate on enforcement efforts. Such cooperation strengthens the institutional capacity of regional competition authorities, enhances their effectiveness in enforcing competition laws, and promotes a “best practice” approach to competition policy within the region.