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Goodbye, ECSC Treaty

Over the years, we have had occasion to report the occasional case falling under the rules on competition contained in the Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community, as distinct from the rules contained in the Treaty establishing the European (Economic) Community, or EC Treaty. But, shortly before the appearance of this issue of the newsletter, the ECSC Treaty will have expired; that is, on 23 July 2002. A report on page 152 of this issue explains the arrangements for dealing with current and future coal and steel competition cases. Meanwhile, the Community Treaties are now reduced to two. The other is the Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Treaty (Euratom or EAE Treaty), which contains no separate rules on competition.

Competition in the future Member States

Representatives of the Competition and State aid authorities from the 13 candidate countries and from the Commission of the European Communities met in Vilnius, Lithuania, from 16 to 18 June, for their Eighth Annual Competition Conference. As the negotiations with several countries on accession to the Communities are now reaching their final phase, the conference was held at a key moment in the enlargement process. A credible competition policy and enforcement record are of crucial importance for ensuring that the economies of the future Member States are in good shape and that their companies are well prepared for the European Community's internal market. The main focus of the conference was on the progress achieved by the candidate countries in the field of anti-trust, merger regulation and State aid control in particular, and on how best to organise the future co-operation between the national competition authorities and the Commission.

Among other things discussed at the Conference were the issues raised by energy liberalisation, both in the European Community and in the candidate countries. Recent developments in State aid policy, the ongoing merger review and the state-of-play of antitrust modernisation in the Community also figured on the agenda. In addition, an exchange of views took place on recent developments in the World Trade Organisation and the International Competition Network (ICN). Finally, the Commission presented its proposal on how to deal with State aids that have been granted by the candidate countries before accession, but may have effects beyond their joining the Community. ■