

Establishment of CRANE. Report

At the end of 2013, the Centre for Antitrust and Regulatory Studies (CARS) established a new academic network under the name CRANE – Competition and Regulation Academic Network Europe – Visegrad, Balkan, Baltic, East. YARS 2014, 7(9) can be considered as the first result of the Network's existence.

Membership in CRANE is open to, and its membership is to be further extended to, persons and institutions of an academic nature dealing with the law and/or economics of antitrust and sector specific regulation. Invitations to join CRANE have been extended first of all to academics and academic institutions of the Central and Eastern European (CEE) region – starting with 'new' EU member States: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Croatia. Membership has also been offered to scholars and academic institutions of neighbouring countries of Southern and Eastern Europe aspiring to join the European Union such as Bosnia & Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova, Serbia and Ukraine. The initiators of CRANE would also be happy to welcome into the Network academics interested in antitrust and regulation from the remaining European countries including, in particular, citizens of CEE countries working and studying elsewhere in Europe. Finally, CRANE intends to cooperate with national and EU competition protection authorities as well as with professional law and economic consultancies. Almost twenty institutions and a few dozen scholars have already stated their intention to join CRANE.

CRANE membership is not dependent on fees. Any financial responsibilities related to the workings of the Network are going to derive from specific contracts and the budgets of individual projects undertaken in its framework.

CRANE's aim is to prepare one-off publications and periodicals. The Yearbook and Antitrust and Regulatory Studies (YARS) is going to become CRANE's flagship project. Membership in YARS's Scientific Board as well as in the Editorial Board is going to be extended to persons from not yet represented countries. CRANE will also actively engage in the organisation of regional conferences, seminars and workshops. The Network will be involved in the preparation of a conference on private antitrust enforcement in CEE countries. The conference would take place in 2015 in Białystok. The main reason for this new initiative is the adoption on 17 April 2014 by the European Parliament of the Directive on certain rules governing actions for damages under national law for infringements of the competition law provisions of the Member States and of the European Union. This Directive may prove of

particular importance for CEE countries. Currently, many CEE countries do not have private antitrust enforcement at all, or it occurs only sporadically and faces considerable barriers. CRANE is of the belief that discussing the Directive might stimulate private antitrust enforcement in the region. It would also be useful to discuss how best to implement the Directive in CEE countries. Finally, CRANE is meant to foster regional cooperation in the field of research including joint application for international grants such as those available in the EU. It is worth mentioning that plans are currently underway for the preparation of a joint research project for scholars from the CEE region regarding negotiated antitrust enforcement, that is, legal institutions that enable undertakings to co-draft antitrust decisions including, in particular, commitments decisions, settlements and conditional merger clearances.

The infrastructure already accumulated by CARS acts as the logistic and organisational seat of CRANE and it will remain so for at least the first 3 to 5 years of its existence. The Network does not have its own webpage yet but basic information on CRANE can be found on CARS's webpage: http://www.cars.wz.uw.edu.pl/o_nas-08.html.

The initiators of the Network hope that it will attract active participants from many different countries and will give its members valuable experiences in the field of antitrust and sector specific regulation as well as improve international cooperation in these research areas.

Dr. hab. Anna Piszcz

Assistant Professor at the Department of Public Economic Law,
Faculty of Law, University of Białystok;
member of the Advisory Council to the UOKiK President