
Competition and Sustainable Development Goals – What Role for Competition Law and Policy?

Annika Stöhr*¹ and Oliver Budzinski¹

¹Technische Universität Ilmenau – Allemagne

Résumé

In the current competition law and policy debate the fundamental question arises to what extent the increase in economic power of individual companies or in individual markets – for example, by relaxing antitrust law – creates incentives for more "sustainable behavior" on the part of these companies or in these markets. To take a closer look into that, we analyze the interrelation between the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the public interest goal "competitive markets and the protection thereof by competition policy". For this, we develop four groups to differentiate the SDGs (i) Environmental Goals, (ii) Climate Goals, (iii) Economic Goals, and (iv) Social Goals and examine the respective type of interrelation. We address the SDGs and their interrelation to the incentives provided by the competitive process. In doing so, we identify cases of goal coherence, goal neutrality, and goal conflict – in the latter cases, we additionally analyze whether economic power is able to provide "better" (in the sense of reaching the SDGs) incentives for company behavior and under which conditions.

For each of the four groups, our analysis provides valuable insights for the necessity, scope, and limits of SDG-based competition policy, thus providing grounds for further analyses. That relates to cases in question or to the shaping/reforming of competition law and practices.

*Intervenant