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2021.02

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NO.104

By Lifang & Partners

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SAMR Releases 2020 Antitrust Annual Review

On February 5, 2021, China's State Administration for Market Regulation ("SAMR") released a thorough review of the antitrust work in 2020, which summarised various aspects including supporting the prevention and control of the COVID-19 pandemic and resumption of work and production, regulating the order of platform economic competition, deepening antitrust enforcement in the field of people's livelihood, maintaining a unified national market, continuing to improve the antitrust legal system, and effectively strengthening the top-level design of competition policies. According to the review, in 2020, Chinese antitrust regulators concluded 108 monopoly cases and fined CNY 391 million. Besides, SAMR accepted 481 merger filing cases, concluded 473 cases, and approved 4 cases with conditions. ([More](#))

China Architectural and Industrial Glass Association Cooperating with SAMR's Antitrust Investigation

On February 5, 2021, in response to SAMR's antitrust investigation, the China Architectural and Industrial Glass Association issued a statement, undertaking to (i) actively cooperate with SAMR in relevant investigations and accept the supervision of the industry and all sectors of society, (ii) immediately stop, and no longer participate in or organize members to carry out any activities such as price coordination, production reduction, production restriction that violate the *Anti-Monopoly Law* ("AML"), (iii) strengthen the study of antitrust rules, modify or abolish the documents suspected of violating the AML, and ensure compliance, and (iv) use its advantages to organize members to formulate antitrust-related self-discipline systems, enhance antitrust awareness, and make independent operating decisions. ([More](#))

Alibaba Fully Cooperating with SAMR's Antitrust Investigation

On February 2, 2021, Alibaba issued its 2021 Q3 financial statement. It mentioned that on December 24, 2020, Alibaba received a notice from SAMR, stating that it had commenced an investigation pursuant to the AML. The investigation is ongoing and Alibaba is fully cooperating with SAMR. Alibaba has established a special taskforce with leaders from relevant business units to conduct internal reviews. Alibaba will continue to actively communicate with SAMR on compliance with regulatory requirements. ([More](#))

China to Fully Improve Fair Competition System and Enhance Competition Enforcement

On January 31, 2021, the General Office of the CPC Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council jointly issued the *Action Plan for Building a High Standard Market System* ("Plan"). According to the Plan, China will fully improve the fair competition system, strengthen the rigid constraints of the fair competition review system, strengthen and improve antitrust and anti-unfair competition enforcement, and eliminate regional division and local protection. It will formulate antitrust guidelines for specific sectors, e.g., active pharmaceutical ingredients and the exemption guidelines, and issue guidelines for overseas antitrust compliance. It will promote the improvement of legal standards in platform enterprise monopoly identification, data collection and use management, and consumer rights

protection. It will also strengthen antitrust and anti-unfair competition regulations in new business fields such as platform economy and the sharing economy. ([More](#))

Jiangxi Regulators Launch Campaign against Prominent Problems in Company Seal Market

Recently, the Jiangxi Provincial Public Security Department and the Jiangxi Provincial Administration of Market Regulation jointly issued a work plan and launched a three-month-long special law enforcement campaign against prominent problems in company seal market. According to the plan, one of the main tasks is to tackle abuses of administrative power to eliminate or restrict competition, including the industry associations and seal material companies use their information advantage or administrative power of local authorities to tell or imply the seal shops to purchase seal materials, seal machines and supporting products from specific companies or brands, or, to tell or imply the buyers to purchase the seals at designated seal shops. ([More](#))

Overseas News

Senator Klobuchar Introduces Sweeping Bill to Promote Competition and Improve Antitrust Enforcement

On February 4, 2021, U.S. Senator, the lead Democrat on the Judiciary Subcommittee on Antitrust, Competition Policy and Consumer Rights, Amy Klobuchar introduced sweeping new legislation, i.e., the *Competition and Antitrust Law Enforcement Reform Act*, to reinvigorate America's antitrust laws and restore competition to American markets. This bill proposes to give federal enforcers the resources they need to do their jobs, strengthen prohibitions on anticompetitive conduct and mergers, and make additional reforms to improve enforcement. Specifically, it proposes to (i) increase enforcement resources, e.g., authorize increases to federal antitrust agencies' annual budget, (ii) strengthen prohibitions against anticompetitive mergers, e.g., shift the legal burden from the government to the merging companies to prove their merger will not violate the law under certain situations, (iii) prevent harmful dominant firm conduct, (iv) establish a new, independent Federal Trade Commission ("FTC") division to conduct market studies and merger retrospectives, and (v) implement additional reforms to enhance antitrust enforcement. ([More](#))

Following FTC Staff Recommendation to Challenge Transaction, Tronox Abandons Proposed Acquisition of Tizir Titanium and Iron

On January 29, 2021, the FTC announced that given Tronox's announcement that it has abandoned its acquisition of TiZir Titanium and Iron ("TTP"), the FTC has closed its investigation into the proposed acquisition. According to the FTC, Tronox is one of the largest producers of titanium dioxide pigment and TTI is one of the few producers globally of chloride slag, a key input used to make titanium dioxide pigment. FTC staff thoroughly investigated the proposed acquisition, particularly the potential for vertical harm. As a result, FTC staff had recommended that the Commission challenge the transaction. FTC staff cooperated closely with staff of the U.K. Competition and Markets Authority throughout the investigation. ([More](#))

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