

Dear Ladies and Gentleman, Honourable Expert Speakers, Dear Colleagues,

It is a great honour for me to welcome you at this conference celebrating the 25th anniversary of the foundation of the GVH, i.e. the Hungarian Competition Authority.

I would like to welcome in particular Mr Pierre Poret, Deputy Director for Financial and Enterprise Affairs of the OECD, Mr Barna Berke, State Secretary for Cooperation in European and International Justice Affairs, the high level officials of the Directorate-General for Competition of the European Commission and the OECD, the presidents and high level officials of the European competition authorities that are present, the judges of the Constitutional Court and the other Hungarian courts, the foreign and Hungarian academics, the representatives of foreign and domestic law firms, undertakings and associations, the former and current leaders and colleagues of the GVH.

I know that the competition calendar is filled up with programmes. So let me express my special thanks for coming to Budapest to those who have aligned their engagements with this event and have graced this conference with their presence. I truly hope that you will have a memorable stay in Budapest.

Let me say a few words about today's programme. Anniversaries provide opportunities to reminisce about the past and to positively look to the future. In our programme for today, we have tried to wrap up 25 years of history. Looking back, in my personal opinion there are three main eras to distinguish between in the history of the GVH: first, the start-up-phase of the authority, including the setting up of the regulatory environment and institutional design of the GVH in the Hungarian legal system; second, our efforts connected to the accession of Hungary to the European Union and the enforcement of EU competition rules; third, the pursuit of the optimal operational enforcement of competition law.

In our first panel, former President Vissi, former Vice-President Nagy and I will have a short discussion on the mentioned phases of the GVH: how everything started, what international examples the Hungarian legislator took into account as models, about the preparations for EU membership, and issues raised in our current law enforcement, recent topics and future ideas, etc.

In the second session, our distinguished guests will share their expertise to enlighten us about some issues connected to competition policy trends in transition economies by recalling how these competition enforcement structures were set up, which ideas led the decision-makers in the planning of the competition regimes and the establishment of the enforcing institutions. While you might wonder why we have invited President Mundt to contribute to the topic of

this panel considering that the German economy has been operating pursuant to the principles of the market economy for decades, we thought it would be interesting for us to hear about the German experience connected to the special transitional situation stemming from the German reunification.

You might be aware that besides dealing with classical antitrust and merger issues, the GVH also carries out consumer protection tasks. This receives my utmost support, because in my view this embodies a very important idea. Namely, that although the protection of competition is of significant value in itself, its true significance can only emerge if ultimately consumers perceive the benefits that arise from it. It is no wonder that in recent years the competences of an increasing number of competition authorities have been enriched by consumer protection tasks. Our third panel discusses important consumer protection issues relating to the implementation of the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive and how the enforcement of the domestic rules has evolved over the past two decades.

We will finish today's conference with a grey zone of cartel enforcement: information exchange in connection with databases. Our expert panellists will talk about the challenges that arise in the assessment of such information exchange systems.

Last but not least, Mr Csiszár, Director of DG COMP will round up our conference with his closing remarks.

Ladies and Gentlemen, while we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the foundation of the GVH, Hungarian cartel enforcement is much older than the authority itself. It was Act No 20 of 1931 that set up the Cartel Committee and the Cartel Court as a special court attached to the Hungarian Supreme Court, the Curiae. With this in mind the GVH decided to delve deeper into the past of Hungarian cartel enforcement. We therefore issued an invitation to tender, as a result of which two renowned universities have conducted thorough research on the institutional set-up and the enforcement record of early Hungarian competition law. The GVH commemorates its predecessor with a brochure available in English and Hungarian at the information desk.

That's it for now. I wish you a pleasant conference with motivating discussions.