



Annual Report

Dear Colleague,

As the Forum recovered from its December 2023 21st Anniversary Event, replete with silver spoons, gold embossed walls and alarmingly dangled heavy weaponry, we set about putting together a programme of events for 2024.

I think it is safe to say that 2024 showed the breadth and timeliness of CLF's programme of Roundtables in both London and Brussels. The pace of regulatory reforms seems to have slowed down not one jot. The bedding in of the UK's digital markets reforms and associated administrative apparatus has continued apace, with the UK flexing its regulatory muscles by calling in cases that raised some eyebrows and engaging in deep technically technology matters. The EU struggled with reforms to Article 102, a topic that bookended the CLF programme almost symmetrically.

At the same time events and pressures from outside the competition world took increasing amounts of our attention. The ever-present threat of climate change impacted our roundtables on sustainability and on collective rights of redress; employment rights and sectoral exceptionalism for sports fed into our roundtable on sports law and regulation.

At the same time elections and long-standing economic concerns raised the importance of the relationship between competition policy and economic wealth, productivity, industrial policy and income generation. Some of these debates have been dormant for decades and perhaps only last appeared in the 'public interest' debates of the 1980s and 1990s. In the EU the publication of the Draghi Report and in the UK, the election of a new government with productivity and growth at its policy core, will set much of the tone for 2025 and beyond.

The year saw a heavy focus on technology and digital market issues, with a growing focus on Artificial Intelligence (don't worry this Annual Report was written by actual humans: or was it?) We expect to return to these topics as they evolve in the coming years.

In slight deviations from our normal practices, we held roundtable discussions on criminal cartel enforcement and corruption in government procurement, even hosting a book launch (publishers please note this is quite a good way to reach your audience!) and an intimate discussion on the future of anti-trust and competition enforcement in the USA from an active policy participant. CLF has an enviable network of 'friends' around the Globe and are happy to host small discussion events, what our US colleagues call 'brown bag' events, though being European we eschew such flimsy lunch carriers!

We ended the year in a similar way to 2023, trying to generate debate about what awaits us in 2025 and beyond. It is easy in our everyday work to lose sight of the winds and currents that batter our competition policy vessel in its serene forward motion.

2025 looks like it will be another eventful year; the bedding down of Article 102 reforms, further innovations in AI and responses to it, the firming up of industrial policy impacts in competition law and a whole new dynamic in Transatlantic competition policymaking that will affect all those issues that we have covered and more, including space policy, advanced technologies, trade/competition interfaces and more.

As a final year we need to say a big thank you to our members, who sustain us intellectually as much as financially and without whom we would simply not be able to put on any sort of programme. A big thank you to all our speakers, who gave freely of their time to engage with a very well-informed audience, not short of opinions themselves. We know that for both groups there are competing demands from a newly invigorated conference circuit. We hope that our format and our operating model set us apart and continue to enjoy your support.

With that in mind our Advisory Board approved an increase in fees from May 2025. Fees, set at £3,500 in 2002, have never risen. Inflation alone puts that 2002 fee at almost £6,500. We recognise times are difficult and are not raising fees fully in line with inflation. As we transition to new fee level of £5,000, we are moving our billing period to align with our member's financial years and so giving all existing and new Members free membership from December 2024 to May 2025. Bill's will not be sent out (as normal) in December but will start to arrive in April 2025. Any questions will be happily fielded by either Director.

We end an exciting and busy year we wish you and your families the best of whichever holiday you celebrate and look forward to meeting with you all at some point in 2025.

You may already have received email from us explaining that from this December 2024 it will no longer be necessary to log in to the BIICL website in order to make a booking for our events and training courses. The update to our systems will also mean access to the Competition Law Forum (CLF) member-only pages of the website will change.

From Monday 9th of December 2024 CLF Forum member-only pages will be password protected. When you go to the [Forum only pages](#) on our website you will need to use the password **c85Aq=x** to open the pages. We welcome your feedback on the new arrangements. Please do let either [Forum director](#) or [membership team](#) know if you encounter any issues with the new password protected pages.

We unfortunately finish our missive on a sad note. Many of you will have been fortunate enough during your Membership of CLF to have met our colleague, Clare Priestley. Sadly, Clare passed away in November after a short illness. Clare was 'our person' in BIICL who helped us navigate the rest of the organisation and did so with great kindness, humour and warmth. If you were lucky enough to meet Clare, you were the better for it. Clare will be sadly and badly missed by us both and the wider BIICL and CLF families.

May we take this opportunity to wish you all a Happy Hanukkah, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Warm regards,

[Dr Liza Lovdahl Gormsen](#) [Phil Evans](#)

Co-Directors, Competition Law Forum

Membership

Benefits of Membership:

- An invitation to exclusive Forum events. These are CPD-accredited.
- The opportunity to participate in an independently run Forum that aims to influence policy, and which provides an arena for on-going and constructive debate with regulators and other decision-makers.
- An opportunity to interact with regulations and government officials.
- The opportunity to act as speakers at both CLF and public events.
- Attendance at a preferential rate to all public events related to the field.
- Online access to ICLQ <http://www.biicl.org/iclq>. You should all have received login details, but if you have any questions about access, please do not hesitate to contact Bart Kolerski at b.kolerski@biicl.org

CLF Events 2024:

The CLF identifies areas requiring debate and analysis, and provides the required forum and experts, thereby contributing to policy initiatives. Below you will find a list of subjects and issues being discussed during 2024.

We kicked off 2024 with our **Global Sustainability and Antitrust Conference** on Jan 25th. The stellar case of speakers, including Philipp Dimakopoulos, (European Commission, DG Comp CET), Thorsten Käseberg, (Head of the competition policy unit in the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy), Ann Pope, (Senior Director for Antitrust CMA) Will Richards, (Assistant Director & member of the Sustainability Taskforce at the ACCC), Martijn Snoep, (Chairman of the Netherlands Authority for Consumers and Markets, ACM), Kenta Suzuki, (Senior Planning Officer, Coordination Division, Japan Fair Trade Commission) illustrated how much interest there is in the issue, and how global CLF's reach is.

We moved into February with a Roundtable in Brussels, on **The Future of Article 102 TFEU** on Feb 22nd. Anchored by Pinelopi Stamou from the EC, the Roundtable set the tone for the debate on the future of Article 102, an issue that would bookend the CLF year. We discussed what to expect from the European Commission's draft guidelines on exclusionary abuses under Article 102 TFEU.

May saw CLF tackle the highly vexed issue of the relationship between competition law and sports law. Our May 3rd event **Extra Time or Penalties? The Future Shape of the Sports/Competition Law Relationship** featured a fully loaded bench, including Professor Stefan Szymanski (Uni of Michigan), Kieran Maguire (Uni of Liverpool), Ben Van Rompuy, (Assistant Professor, University of Leiden), and Professor Stephen Weatherill, (Emeritus Jacques Delors Professor of European Law, Somerville College, Oxford). Unusually the roundtable also heard from the players/fan's perspective with representatives of the Black Footballers Partnership and the Cricket Research Network.

June showed our flexibility with 20th June seeing both a roundtable on **Combatting and Criminalizing Cartels and Corruption** and a book launch (Anderson, Jones and Kovacic), **Combatting Corruption and Collusion in Public Procurement: A Challenge for Government's Worldwide**. Speakers for both events included Terry Calvani, (Senior advisor, Brunswick), Rory Jones, (Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer), Prof. Andreas Stephan, (UEA), Michael Bowsher KC, (Monckton Chambers), Prof. Kamala Dawar, (QMU), Lord Garnier KC, (4 Pump Court).

Our **Artificial Intelligence & Partnerships: AI & the DMA** quickly followed on June 26th in Brussels, covering probably the hottest topic on the planet at the moment in pretty much every field, not least in

competition policy. The heavy weight cast outlined the approaches to date and possible future directions for enforcers and policy makers. Participants heard from Brice Allibert, (Head of Unit, DG Comp, EC), Dr George Barker, (Cross-Disciplinary Machine Learning Research Cluster (OXML), University of Oxford), Cyril Hariton, (Director, Berkeley Research Group) and Rita Wezenbeek, (Director of DG Connect, EC). It became clear that in Europe, the Commission will not pursue AI partnership agreements under the EUMR. Instead, they may consider if these agreement causes an issue under Article 101 TFEU.

CLF returned from the summer torpor with a bang on September 10th, convening a CLF 21st Anniversary Roundtable on **The Future of Private Litigation and Collective Redress**. The Roundtable served to showcase the breadth of work in the area at BIICL, with contributions from Dr Ivano Alogna, (Snr Research Fellow in Environmental and Climate Change Law BIICL) and Professor Duncan Fairgrieve, (Senior Research Fellow in Comparative Law & Director, Product Liability Forum, BIICL) and Dr Sara Razai, (Research Fellow & International Projects Lead, BIICL). The BIICL contributions added to the remarkable keynote presentations by Michael Hausfeld, (Founder and Chair Emeritus Hausfeld) and Prof Rachael Mulheron, (Professor of Tort Law and Civil Justice (KC Hon) QMU) and impressive practical experience of Stephen Kinsella OBE, (Law for Change, Flint Global).

October saw an informal gathering on 25th October for a spirited **Roundtable discussion with Diana Moss**, (VP and Director of Competition Policy at the Progressive Policy Institute, Washington DC), which covered the experience in the USA of “neo-Brandeisianism”, and the prospects for competition policy in the (then) upcoming US Presidential elections.

The end of the year had CLF showing no signs of slowing down. November 19th saw the **6th Annual BIICL/Linklaters Tech Antitrust Roundtable**, covering the evolving regulatory landscape in the EU and UK and how the regulation of AI and other innovations will likely proceed. A packed set of speakers included Jessica Lennard (Chief Strategy & External Affairs Officer, CMA), Verity Egerton-Doyle, (Partner, Linklaters), Ronan Flanagan (Snr Legal Director for Antitrust, CMA), Lucia Bonova (Head of Unit for Digital Platforms, EC DG Comp), Shula Teare van Hagan (AGC, EU Policy & Compliance, DuckDuckGo), Kai-Uwe Kühn (MD, BRG), Fatima Fiandei (Economics Director, Ofcom), Andrea Appella (AGC EMEA, OpenAI), and Claudia Berg (GC, ICO).

Barely ten days later Brussels saw CLF host and event on **Article 102 TFEU: a Discussion with the European Commission on the Draft Exclusionary Guidelines**. We started the year forecasting the likely changes and ended the year in Brussels discussing with the EC how the reforms were shaping up.

Pinelopi Stamou, (EC) reprised her role from our February event and was joined by Matthew Heim, (GWU), Dr. Timo Klein, (Uthrect University), Vera Pozzato, (EC), and Mariya Serafimova, (Court of Justice of the EU). It became clear that the European Commission must consider some of the points made in the Draghi Report in their final draft of the guidelines.

In the spirit of the season, our last event on December 5th saw member Latham &Watkins kindly host a roundtable on **The Bounds of Competition Law**, which saw Professors Ariel Ezrachi (University of Oxford) and Spencer Waller (Loyola University Chicago) and Bernardine Adkins (Gowling WLG) discussing the relationship between competition law and wider issues such as gender, power, democracy and inequality. A fitting way to round off a busy year.

Some of the planned CLF events for 2025 (TBC):

- AI, Growth and competitiveness
- How Regulators Understand Consumer Behaviour
- 1st Annual Merger Conference
- Competition Law and Inequality
- Competition, Productivity, Industrial Policy and Protectionism
- Space Law and Competition Law

Annual Invoices:

In 2025 CLF is turning 22 and as a more mature organisation we need to look towards financial stability that may have eluded us in our teenage years. When CLF was founded two decades back Membership fees were set at £3,500; where they have remained ever since. If we were simply to keep fees in line with inflation a simple trip to the Bank of England inflation calculator shows that the £3,500 figure set in 2002 is equivalent to £6,342.28 in October 2024.

We hope that CLF has shown over its lifetime that it offers value for money in the depth, timeliness and quality of its programme, speakers and networking opportunities. At our last Advisory Board Meeting we had a long discussion on fees and funding processes and took two decisions.

Firstly, we are seeking from members a below-inflation rise in fees to **£5,000**. We recognise this is a significant rise from existing frozen 2002-level fees, but trust that you recognise both the value that CLF brings and the logic of our case for a raise.

Secondly, we will be shifting our annual invoicing from December to coincide with the normal financial year planning that you all operate to. Invoices will thus not be sent out until April/May 2025.



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To soften the blow of the rate, rise and shift in invoicing we are essentially giving all Members the period between January and April/May for free. We hope to announce soon an exciting range of events for that period and some fresh ideas for engaging more with elements of the competition community largely hitherto untapped.

Should you have any questions regarding membership, please contact either [Director](#) and they will be happy to take your call.

[Dr Liza Lovdahl Gormsen](#) [Phil Evans](#)