British Institute of International and Comparative Law

Competition Law Forum

CLF Annual Report 2025

Annual Report 2025: May You Live in Interesting Times

We kicked off 2025 by trying to get a solid grip on the topic of growth and the role of the CMA. Our 26 February 2025 Roundtable on Growth, Competition and the CMA bravely let the economists in the room, a stellar cast of **Dame Prof Diane Coyle**, Bennett Professor of Public Policy, University of Cambridge, **Dr Helen Jenkins**, Partner, Oxera, **Dr Mike Walker**, Chief Economic Adviser, CMA, and **Dr Adrian Majumdar**, Managing Partner, RBB Economics, wax lyrical on how competition policy affected growth, just not in the way anyone pushing the relationship really wanted. That set up the equally starry panel of lawyers, **Tim Cowen**, Chair Antitrust Practice, Preiskel & Co, **Bernardine Adkins**, Partner, EU Trade and Competition, Gowling WLG, **Simon Pritchard**, Partner, Latham & Watkins and **Mark Jones,** Partner, Jones Day, outline some of the practical steps the CMA itself could take to both understand the growth agenda and reform its processes to make it more responsive to external pressures. Much of the subsequent debate highlighted how far many in the competition community felt the CMA had shifted from its early years and how much of the pain it was now feeling had been as a result of its own actions.

Having 'aired' the growth issue we moved onto a potentially new, and highly significant new area of responsibility for the CMA. On 01 May 2025 The CMA'S New Consumer Regime: Making it Work we heard a highly detailed explanation of the new CMA consumer powers from **Emma Cochrane,** Interim Executive Director, Consumer Protection, Competition and Markets Authority and **Jason Freeman, Director of Consumer Law, CMA.** The Roundtable gave everyone the chance to acquaint themselves with just how significant the CMA's new powers were and how the decision making structure to use those powers differed from the processes with which most of us were comfortable in the competition field.

Following the ritual sacrifice of CMA Chair Markus Brokkerink on the altar of 'growth' we held a roundtable on 07 July 2025 Doug Gurr's first 100 days: reform and refocussing. The chance to take stock and indeed take a deep breath was taken by a wide and varied set of panels, including **Lord Tyrie**, House of Lords, former Chair CMA, **Vinous Ali,** Deputy Executive Director at the Startup Coalition, **Samiah Anderson,** Head of Digital Regulation, techUK, **Claudia Berg,** Partner at Covington & Burling, former CMA and ICO, **Andrea Coscelli,** Partner at Keystone, former CEO of the CMA, **Stuart Hudson,** Partner at Brunswick Group, former Senior Director of the CMA, **Simon Pritchard,** Partner at Latham &

Watkins, former Director of mergers at CMA.. While taking a deep breath was the target, many participants were very much breathing out a litany of problems and errors they were laying at the CMA's door.

Our first meeting back after the summer break was one of our initiatives to engage with other fora in BIICL. We worked with the Human Rights and Due Diligence Forum and the Bingham Centre's Business Network on 15th September we put on 'From Environmental to Human Rights Business Collaboration—a Competition Law Lens'. A tight nit panel of **Emma Griffiths**, Rolls-Royce, **Simon Holmes**, University of Oxford, **Tim Johnston**, Brick Court Chambers and **Marie Rumsby**, Fair Trade mapped out the existing relationship between environmental standards and agreements and competition law and used this experience to outline how lessons can be learned for the evolving relationship between competition law and human right standards and agreements.

We moved towards the end of the year with sessions in Brussels. 30th September 2025 saw CLF host a Roundtable on 'The European Commission's review of the DMA two years in'. A high level set of speakers included **Rita Wezenbeek,** Director DG Connect European Commission, **Giulio Federico,** Partner at Oxera, **Thomas Graf,** Partner at Cleary Gottlieb, **Agustín Reyna,** Director General of BEUC and **Elizabeth Sinclair,** Partner at Clifford Chance. The discussion highlighted the lessons for an initiative that, perhaps above all others, has been at the centre of a real Transatlantic divergence and step change in the manner by which competition law is enforced.

10th November 2025 saw our **7th Annual BIICL/Linklaters Tech Antitrust Roundtable.** Now a staple of the conference year, a star studded cast including **Luisa Affuso,** Chief Economist, Ofcom, **Nuno Alvim,** Partner, RBB Economics, **Samiah Anderson,** Head of Digital Regulation, techUK, **Andrea Coscelli,** Head of Keystone Europe and former CEO, CMA, **Jonny Ford,** Partner, Linklaters, **David Foster,** Partner, Frontier Economics, **Chloe MacEwen,** Head of Competition EMEA, Microsoft, and **Tania Van Den Brande,** Senior Director, CMA Digital Markets Unit reviewed where the state of digital antitrust enforcement lay as well as focusing on the hot topic of enforcement in AI.

2026 Roundtables

As the New Year approaches, invites have gone out for our first events of 2026. We kick off the year, wiping the sleep from our eyes on Jan 15th 2026 with an event looking at two of the hot topics in collective actions; **the evolving role of the Class Representative and Litigation Finance.** We are fortunate to have got a strong cast of speakers, anchored by Ben Tidswell of the CAT who can offer insights on the evolving thinking of the CAT.

Our second kick-starter for the year will happen on Feb 25th, 2026, when Sir John Vickers and Prof Ariel Ezrachi will anchor a look at the **current state of competition law enforcement** and what can be done to build more resilience into the system. Interest is already strong in this roundtable from friends of CLF and honorary members.

Brussels is lined up to host a trio of early year crackers from CLF; the first, a **Roundtable on DMA and potential conflicts with other regulations**. Running late January/early February makes it unfortunately too late (and in the wrong city) for Panto Season – so no chance of an 'oh yes it does; oh no it doesn't' set up. Our second and third will run on the **Article 102 Guidelines** and later in the year on the **EU Merger Guidelines**. If it is not too early to remind people to block out their diaries; our **Annual Tech Conference with Linklaters** will run on 9th

November next year. Those are just our confirmed Roundtables; more will be announced nearer the time; and we are always open to suggestions and collaboration.

Organisational

Membership

The Budget is now settled. Our increase in membership dues has overall proven to be a success with 29 Members now on the books: 27 full Members and 2 overseas Members.

BIICL

CLF is continuing to work ever more closely with other parts of BIICL through joint working and promotion of events of interest. Our recent roundtable with colleagues from the Human Rights and Due Diligence Forum and the Bingham Centre Business Network was our most concrete manifestation of this.

CLF takes part in the weekly update calls and the monthly management committee meetings and had a monthly update call with Spyros, the former BIICL Director, and will engage positively with his replacement.

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