China Monthly Antitrust Update

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Legislation

Provincial Governments of Hubei, Shaanxi, etc. Issue Opinions on Implementing the Fair Competition Review Mechanism

On 1 December 2016, Hubei Province issued the Notice of Provincial Government on Implementing the Fair Competition Review Mechanism in Development of Market System to regulate government’s activities in enacting policies that restrict or eliminate competition. On 5 December, Shaanxi Province issued the Opinions of Shaanxi Provincial Government on Implementing the Fair Competition Review Mechanism in Development of Market System, in which specific arrangements, review targets, enforcement procedures, safeguard mechanism are laid down. Since the State Council issued the Opinions on Establishment of Fair Competition Review Mechanism in Development of Market System on 14 June 2016, several provinces including Jiangsu, Hunan, Hebei, Liaoning, Beijing, Ningxia, Guizhou, Hubei and Shaanxi have subsequently issued their respective implementing opinions.

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2. [http://www.shaanxi.gov.cn/0/103/11849.htm](http://www.shaanxi.gov.cn/0/103/11849.htm)
The PSAMB of NDRC Signs Agreements with Several Universities for Cooperation on Competition Policy and Antitrust

On December 21, The Price Supervision and Anti-Monopoly Bureau (“PSAMB”) of the National Development and Reform Commission (“NDRC”) has signed competition policy and antitrust cooperation agreements with several universities including China University of Political Science and Law, Wuhan University and Jinan University respectively. Together, the parties will promote the implementation of competition policy and improve the level of antitrust enforcement in a joint effort. Pursuant to the agreements, the PSAMB will launch a series of deep cooperation in decision-making consultation, theoretical research and talent training. The signing ceremony was attended by DG Zhang Handong and hosted by DDG Li Qing. ³

SAIC Signs MoU with CMA to Further Cooperation in Competition Law

During his visit of U.K. from December 14 to 20, Vice Minister of the State Administration for Industry and Commerce (“SAIC”) Liu Junchen met with President of Competition and Markets Authority (“CMA”) David Currie and subsequently signed the Memorandum of Understanding between SAIC of the People’s Republic of China and CMA of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Liu said that with the increasingly frequent economic interaction between China and UK, the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding will further the communication and cooperation between the two countries in competition and consumer protection issues. ⁴

Sino-German Merger Control Seminar Held in Beijing

From December 8 to 9, the Anti-Monopoly Bureau (“AMB”) of the Ministry of Commerce (“MOFCOM”) and Die Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (“GIZ”) jointly held the Sino-German Merger Control Seminar in Beijing. DDG Han Chunlin attended the seminar and delivered a speech. Around twenty people attended the seminar, including Marco Haase (Deputy Director of Sino-German Legal Cooperation Program, GIZ), Silke Hossenfelder (Director of Ninth Decision Division, Federal Cartel Office) as well as

³ http://jjs.ndrc.gov.cn/gzdt/201612/t20161221_832040.html
⁴ http://www.saic.gov.cn/ywdt/gsywzjyw/xxb/201612/t20161227_173738.html
representatives from law firms and the AMB. Topics included the development of competition policy, e-commerce and antitrust enforcement, SEP issues in merger control, etc.\textsuperscript{5}

**The PSAMB of NDRC Convenes Brief Meeting with Competition Policy Research Groups**

On December 7, The PSAMB of NDRC convened a brief meeting with four competition policy research groups. DG Zhang Handong, after being briefed by each research group, gave a speech on the necessity and significance of competition policy research. The research groups, composed of the Academy of Macroeconomic Research, Tianjin University of Finance and Economics, East China University of Political Science and Law and China University of Political Science and Law, are to provide theoretical basis as well as practical solution to the implementation of competition policy. The meeting was hosted by DDG Li Qing. Officials from Office of Competition Policy and International Cooperation also attended the meeting.\textsuperscript{6}

**Minister Zhang Mao of SAIC meets with Commissioner Nurlan Aldabergenov of the Competition and Antitrust Regulation under the Eurasian Economic Commission**

On December 6, Minister Zhang Mao of SAIC met with Commissioner Nurlan Aldabergenov of the Competition and Antitrust Regulation under the Eurasian Economic Commission (“EEC”) and his team. During the meeting they discussed issues of law enforcement practice in the field of antimonopoly policy and prospects of international cooperation of the EEC and SAIC, including cooperation in the area of competition law and antitrust policy.\textsuperscript{7}

**CEB of SAIC Convenes Seminar on Informatization of Competition Law Enforcement**

On December 6, Competition Enforcement Bureau (“CEB”) of SAIC convened a seminar on the informatization of competition law enforcement and discussed the research project “Analysis Model of Market Competition Order” consigned to China Renmin University, who took the lead in its development, as well as the construction of “information system of competition law enforcement”. Experts from China Renmin University and Nanjing University of Finance & Economics, officials from Comprehensive Department and Information Center of SAIC and several local AICs attended the seminar.\textsuperscript{8}

\textsuperscript{6} [http://jjs.ndrc.gov.cn/gzdt/201612/t20161207_829488.html](http://jjs.ndrc.gov.cn/gzdt/201612/t20161207_829488.html)
\textsuperscript{7} [http://www.saic.gov.cn/ywdt/gsyw/zjyw/xxb/201612/t20161207_172844.html](http://www.saic.gov.cn/ywdt/gsyw/zjyw/xxb/201612/t20161207_172844.html)
\textsuperscript{8} [http://www.saic.gov.cn/fldyfbzdjz/gzdt/201612/t20161212_173278.html](http://www.saic.gov.cn/fldyfbzdjz/gzdt/201612/t20161212_173278.html)
The PSAMB of NDRC Convenes Case Review Meeting on Administrative Monopoly Cases

From November 29 to 30, PSAMB of the NDRC held a meeting in Beijing on reviewing and analyzing ongoing administrative monopoly cases handled by local enforcers. Requirements were put forward for local law enforcement agencies: realizing the fundamental role of competition policy and the significance of fair competition review mechanism; continuing the investigation of administrative monopoly cases; summarizing experiences and improving the efficiency and quality of law enforcement. Supervisor of provincial price supervision agencies from all over the country attended the meeting and reported current situations of cases that are handled by their respective agencies. Officials of PSAMB introduced methodologies on investigation and evidence collection, competition analysis and production of documentation.9

Antitrust Enforcement Coordination System Established Among Beijing, Shanghai and Henan

On November 25, Tianjin Development and Reform Commission ("Tianjin DRC"), Beijing Municipal Commission of Development and Reform ("Beijing DRC") and Price Bureau of Hebei jointly officially signed the Working Memorandum of Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei Region on Law Enforcement of Anti-Price Monopoly ("Working Memorandum"), in a joint effort to respond to the Central Government’s strategic integration of Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei Region and protect the market competition order and consumers’ welfare of the tri-province area. The Working Memorandum laid down mechanisms on communication and coordination of anti-price monopoly enforcement, coordination of fair competition review, and joint evaluation of competition status. The Working Memorandum marks the establishment of antitrust enforcement coordination system in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei Region. 10

9 http://jjs.ndrc.gov.cn/gzdt/201612/t20161205_829283.html
10 http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2016-12/06/content_5143823.htm
NDRC Cautions Multiple Local Governments to Rectify Administrative Monopoly Activities of Designating Electricity Supply Companies

In recent years, the NDRC has received multiple complaints in regard to local governments designating electricity supply companies for newly-constructed residential buildings. Under such arrangements, the electricity facilities are uniformly constructed and charged, and market competition is eliminated. The NDRC has initiated investigation against the administrative monopoly activities and has ordered rectification of anti-competitive documents. As of now, among the twelve provinces that implement the “uniformly constructed and charged” policy, ten have abolished the policy accordingly.\(^1\)

NDRC Publishes Three Administrative Monopoly Cases in Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen

On December 29, NDRC published three administrative monopoly cases in Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen. Three local government agencies - Beijing Municipal Commission of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, Shanghai Municipal Transportation Commission and Shenzhen Education Bureau, were found to have abused their administrative power respectively and restricted or excluded competition in concrete market\(^2\), Huangpu River tourism market\(^3\), and school uniform market\(^4\). NDRC reiterated that fair competition is the corner stone of market economy. Government agencies are required to abide by China’s Anti-monopoly Law (“AML”) as well as the requirements of fair competition review mechanism, and conduct self-review as soon as possible to clear all unlawful policies and regulations. The NDRC shall keep pushing for the full-scale implementation of fair competition review mechanism, together with relevant regulatory agencies.

\(^{13}\) [http://jjs.ndrc.gov.cn/gzdt/201612/t20161229_833265.html](http://jjs.ndrc.gov.cn/gzdt/201612/t20161229_833265.html)
Guangdong DRC Penalizes Five Express Delivery Companies over Collusion to Raise Price

In December, Guangdong DRC fined five express delivery companies RMB 0.65 million over collusion to raise price. The five companies, Huidong STO Express, Huian ZTO Express, Fuxin Express, Jidaneng Logistics, Sanhui YTO Express, were found to have concertedly raised price, which constituted a violation of Art.13 (1) of the AML. It is understood that the management personnel of the five companies met in a restaurant in Huidong county to discuss the matter of jointly raising price on October 12, and subsequently implemented such concerted practice during November 1 to 5.\(^\text{15}\)

Shanghai Price Bureau Fines Speed Fresh Logistics over RPM

On December 27, Shanghai Price Bureau fined Speed Fresh Logistics RMB 1.98 million over setting resale price floors. It is understood that the company reached and implemented vertical monopoly agreements with distributors and set the resale price floor of Guangming pasteurized milk products (RPM, or resale price maintenance), in violation of Article 14 of the AML. Considering the company had already ceased partial unlawful activities prior to the investigation by revising several sections of its distribution agreement, and that it cooperated with the law enforcement during the investigation, the price bureau imposed a fine of 1% of its 2015 turnover of relevant products in 2015.\(^\text{16}\)

Shanghai Price Bureau Fines SAIC-GM for RPM

On December 23, Shanghai Price Bureau published its penalty decision against automobile manufacturer SAIC-GM. The joint venture, set up by Shanghai Automobile Industry Corporation and U.S. automobile manufacturer General Motors, was found in violation of Art.14 of the AML by exercising resale price maintenance with car dealerships. Pursuant to the AML, Shanghai Price Bureau, after considering the cooperative and active attitude demonstrated in the investigation, demanded SAIC-GM to cease illegal activities and pay an administrative penalty of 4% of its 2015 turnover of relevant products, which amounted to RMB 201 million.\(^\text{17}\)

NDRC Fines Medtronic RMB 118.5 Million for RPM

On December 9, NDRC published its penalty decision against Medtronic (Shanghai)
Management Corporation over reaching and implementing vertical price monopoly agreements in the supply of medical equipment for cardiovascular diseases, restorative therapies, and diabetes in China. Medtronic relied on primary distributors only for supplying products to the Chinese market. From May 2015, it added e-commerce firms, some of which were originally the company’s primary distributors, as a channel. These firms signed distribution agreements with Medtronic, which allowed them to resell products to only secondary distributors and restricted them from directly selling to end-users. NDRC found its practice of fixing resale prices and setting resale price floors in violation of Art.14 of AML and does not qualify for exemption. NDRC ordered the company to immediately stop the practices, and imposed a fine of RMB 118.5 million — accounting for 4% of its turnover of the relevant products in 2015.18

Shaanxi Price Bureau Investigates Yulin Municipal Bureau of Environmental Protection over Administrative Monopoly

In October, 2016, Shaanxi Price Bureau initiated the investigation against Yulin Municipal Bureau of Environmental Protection over administrative monopoly. It is understood that the environmental watchdog, by issuing regulatory documents to lower-level environmental protection agencies, insurance agencies and relevant companies, abused its administrative power and designated Changcheng Insurance Brokers as the sole supplier of environmental pollution liability insurance services for enterprises within Yunlin. The Price Bureau found this practice posed a restriction on environmental pollution insurance market within Yulin and consequently violated Article 37 of the AML. The Price Bureau ordered the environmental watchdog to abolish the unlawful regulatory documents and rectify its practice. During the investigation, the Price Bureau also promoted the knowledge of the AML, fair competition review system to the municipal government officials.19

Hunan AIC Penalizes Local Salt Supplier over Tie-in

Hunan AIC, authorized by SAIC, initiated the investigation against Hunan Salt Industry Group over abuse of dominance on July 15, 2015 and subsequently reached a penalty decision on October 26, 2016. The regulator said the company took advantage of its dominance in salt wholesale market and exercised tie-in sales of high-price salt production with ordinary salt production without justifiable reasons. The regulator found said practice violated the AML and issued the penalty decision of ordering cease of unlawful activities, confiscating illegal gains of RMB 0.69 million and imposing a fine of 1% of the company’s

18 http://jjs.ndrc.gov.cn/fjgld/201612/t20161207_829468.html
annual turnover of relevant products in 2014 in Jianghua, Xintian, Qiyang and Jiangyong, amounting to RMB 0.27 million.\(^{20}\)

**Jiangsu AIC Penalizes Local Water Supplier over Exclusive Dealing**

Jiangsu AIC, authorized by SAIC, initiated the investigation against Suqian Yinkong Water Supply Company over abuse of dominance on June 8, 2015 and subsequently reached a penalty decision on November 28, 2016. The regulator said the public utility restricted the real estate companies to deal exclusively with one designated company in water facility installation market. The regulator found said practice violated the AML and issued the penalty decision of confiscating illegal gains of RMB 3.67 million and imposing a fine of 3% of the company’s last year’s annual turnover, amounting to RMB 1.84 million.\(^{21}\)

**Chong AIC Penalizes Pharmaceutical Company over Refusal to Deal**

Chongqing AIC, authorized by SAIC, initiated the investigation against Chongqing Southwest No.2 Pharmaceutical Factory Co. Ltd over abuse of dominance on June 7, 2016 and subsequently reached a penalty decision on November 14, 2016. It is understood that from February to April 2014, the company refused to supply products to any clients in the phenol active pharmaceutical ingredients market; from May 2014 to December 2015, the company only supplied to 6 companies including Xinxiangfeng Pharmaceutical, who were not its previous regular customers. The period of refusing to deal lasted 23 months, and no justifiable reasons were present. The regulator issued the penalty decision of confiscating illegal gains of RMB 482,883.9 and imposing a fine of 1% of the company’s annual turnover in 2015, amounting to RMB 17,240.\(^{22}\)

**Xinjiang AIC Penalizes Water Group over Exclusive Dealing**

Xinjiang AIC, authorized by SAIC, initiated the investigation against Urumqi Water Industry Group over abuse of dominance on December 18, 2014 and subsequently reached a penalty decision on October 12, 2016. It is understood that the company possesses a dominant position in public water supply market in the Urumqi inner city area. Without legitimate reasons, the company abused its dominance by requiring customers to deal with a designated party only. The regulator found such practice harmed consumer’s interest and excluded competition in relevant market. In the penalty decision, the regulator ordered ceasing of unlawful activities and imposed a fine of 1% of the company’s annual turnover in


2013, amounting to RMB 1.49 million.  

**Nationwide Competition Law Enforcement Campaign Against Public Utility Proved to Be Fruitful: 1267 Cases Investigated with RMB 167 million fined or confiscated**

The SAIC initiated a special law enforcement campaign against the public sector to crack down competition restraints and monopolistic conduct in April this year. After 8 months the SAIC announced its results on December 23: all together 1267 cases (including both unfair competition cases and monopoly cases) have been investigated nationwide, with RMB 167 million fined or confiscated and RMB 470 million refunded to consumers.  

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MoFCOM Releases 19 Streamlined Cases in December

Up to 31 December 2016, MoFCOM has released 19 streamlined cases in December on its website, with a total amount reaching 594 so far.\(^\text{25}\)

Private Actions

Wuxi HuiRun Liquor Enterprises Withdraws from Monopoly Agreement Lawsuit against Luzhou Laojiao

Earlier this year, the plaintiff Wuxi HuiRun Liquor Enterprises sued two companies under Luzhou Laojiao Liquor Group for reaching and implementing monopoly agreements. The case was registered at the court on June 6. Three months later on September 7 the plaintiff filed for withdrawing the lawsuit. The court said the withdrawal is within the discretion of the parties and will not harm the legitimate interests of the nation and third parties, and subsequently issued a decision to grant the withdrawal.26

26 http://wenshu.court.gov.cn/content/content?DocID=21da64e7-4767-4b4b-94fa-33d1775d55b1
China's First Administrative Litigation in Price Monopoly Case: Court Found for Defendant Shaanxi Price Bureau

Since November 2015, the previously government-guided charge standard of automobile inspection in Shaanxi Province has been taken over by the market. Automobile Inspection Association of Shaanxi, Xi’an Sub-division organized the cartel of 31 inspection agencies in Xi’an, Shangluo and Yangling to significantly raise the inspection charge. Such practice attracted attention from NDRC and the Shaanxi Price Bureau. In April 2016, Shaanxi Price Bureau reached the penalty decision against relevant parties over implementing monopoly agreement. In May, Shaanxi Xibu International Automobile, one of the relevant parties, filed for administrative reconsideration at Shaanxi Provincial Government and demanded the dismissal of previous penalty. On September 5, Shaanxi Provincial Government reached its decision in maintaining the previous penalty. In the same month, another relevant party, Xi’an Honglin Industry filed for administrative litigation at Xi’an Railway Transportation Court and requested the court to revoke the penalty decision. The court issued the first instance judgment on December 21 and upheld the decision issued by the price regulator and dismissed all claim of the plaintiff.27

27 http://jjs.ndrc.gov.cn/flqld/201612/t20161226_832626.html
Academia

2016 Annual Conference of Competition Academy of Hunan Law Society & Competition Law Symposium Held in Wuhan

From December 10 to 11, 2016 Annual Conference of Competition Academy of Hunan Law Society & Competition Law Symposium was held at Wuhan University. The symposium, hosted by Competition Academy of Hunan Law Society and organized by Intellectual Property Institute of Wuhan University, attracted nearly 200 people including experts from academic and legal practice fields and industry and media representatives. The symposium focused primarily on frontier and popular issues in competition law and intellectual property law areas.

http://www.hbfxh.com/ShowArticle_4958_1.aspx
Jet Deng and Ken Dai Address “Antitrust Law and Competition Policies in China’s Pharmaceutical Industry” Introduction Conference

On December 16, the “Antitrust Law and Competition Policies in China’s Pharmaceutical Industry” Introduction Conference, jointly organized by Professional Committee of Competition Policy and Law of the China Society for World Trade Organization Studies and Dentons Antitrust Team. 67 representatives from 40 pharmaceutical companies attended the conference. Jet Deng and Ken Dai, co-chairs of the Dentons China Antitrust Team, addressed the conference. Jet Deng’s delivered a keynote speech on Vertical Monopoly in Pharmaceutical Industry: How to Deal with Upstream and Downstream Companies. Combining vertical monopoly cases in recent years and relevant antitrust guidelines, Jet proposed several detailed solutions towards antitrust risk management to pharmaceutical corporations. Ken Dai subsequently delivered another keynote speech on Horizontal Risks in Pharmaceutical Industry: How to Deal with Your Competitors. In his speech, Ken shared with the attendees the coping mechanism towards hard-core cartel investigation, and advised caution to newly emerged risk “concerted practice”. In the end, Ken gave several advices on the cooperation between competitors to avoid the antitrust risk.

Dentons Holds Seminar on “Latest Trend in Antitrust and Competition Law Enforcement and Key Compliance Issues”

On December 13, Dentons Antitrust Team held a small-scale seminar on “Latest Trend in Antitrust and Competition Law Enforcement and Key Compliance Issues” in Shanghai. 25 company representatives were invited. Jet Deng attended the seminar and delivered a keynote speech on Analysis of Loyalty Discount in Tetra Pak Case and Commercial Bribery in the Tire Industry Case. Jet gave a brief introduction on latest change and future trend in antitrust law enforcement, and pointed out the key industries that have been placed on the watchdogs’ lists. In the analysis of the latest Tetra Pak case, after introducing the history and background of law enforcement, Jet approached this case with a comparative perspective, citing detailed analytical methodologies of European Commission and U.S. antitrust agencies, in order to explain different kinds of loyalty discounts and provide guidance to the compliance work of corporations.
Dentons Lawyer Addresses 2016 Annual Conference of Competition Academy of Hunan Law Society & Competition Law Symposium

From December 10 to 11, 2016 Annual Conference of Competition Academy of Hunan Law Society & Competition Law Symposium was held at Wuhan University. Yuanjie He from Dentons Antitrust Team attended the symposium and delivered a speech on Market Definition in the Antitrust Practice. Based on the practical experience of Dentons Antitrust Team, Yuanjie summarized three characteristics of relevant market: objectivity, uncertainty and changeability. Lastly, Yuanjie pointed out the strategy antitrust lawyers adopt in market definition.
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This Public Account focus on updates of China’s antitrust law, including legislation, authorities, public enforcement, merger control, private litigation, academia, etc. Case study, theory introduction, practice guidance, original antitrust law reviews and articles are also contained. Welcome to join us.

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