



Department of Justice

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DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION SIGN COOPERATION AGREEMENT WITH COLOMBIAN ANTITRUST AGENCY

Agreement Provides for Increased Cooperation and Coordination Between U.S. and Colombian Antitrust Agencies

WASHINGTON – Assistant Attorney General Bill Baer of the Department of Justice’s Antitrust Division has signed an antitrust cooperation agreement with the Colombian antitrust agency on behalf of the Department of Justice. The agreement also was signed by Federal Trade Commission Chairwoman Edith Ramirez, and went into effect today with the signature of Pablo Felipe Robledo, Colombia’s Superintendent of Industry and Commerce. The agreement will enable the antitrust agencies in the two countries to further enhance their law enforcement relationship.

The new agreement contains provisions for antitrust enforcement cooperation and coordination, conflict avoidance and consultations with respect to enforcement actions, and technical cooperation. The agreement also contains confidentiality protections.

The U.S. antitrust agencies and Colombia’s Superintendence of Industry and Commerce, the agency that enforces Colombia’s competition law, have built a strong enforcement relationship over the years, both bilaterally and under the terms of the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement.

“The Colombians have a proven antitrust system, and this agreement will allow us to work more closely with our colleagues in Bogotá,” said Assistant Attorney General Baer. “Enforcement cooperation based on sound policies is critical to maintaining competitive markets in the Americas, particularly for economies as linked as ours.”

“Colombia has a well-developed competition regime, and we have a strong working relationship with its competition agency,” said Chairwoman Ramirez. “We look forward to working with the Superintendence to advance our shared goal of promoting convergence around sound competition policy throughout the hemisphere.”

Highlights of the new agreement include:

- Mutual acknowledgment of the importance of antitrust cooperation, including information sharing and possible coordination of enforcement actions with regard to related matters;
- Agreement to take one another's important interests into account in order to minimize possible conflicts arising out of antitrust enforcement actions; and
- Agreement to maintain the confidentiality of any sensitive information provided by the other party.

The agreement entering into force today does not change existing law in either country. Colombia has had a law dedicated to the preservation of competition since 1959. This cooperation agreement is similar in substance to those previously signed by the U.S. antitrust agencies with other jurisdictions in the Americas, including Brazil, Canada, Chile and Mexico.

According to the Office for the United States Trade Representative, Colombia is currently the United States' 21st-largest goods trading partner, with \$40 billion in total (two way) goods trade during 2013. Goods exports totaled \$19 billion, while imports totaled \$22 billion.

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