
PREFACE

The idea behind this book is for in-house lawyers and practitioners, officers in European or national public administration and students to benefit from a comprehensive set of charts illustrating the “core” of EU competition law together with a brief companion text that relates back to the charts. This concept was developed through the combined professional experience of the authors, in both legal practice and in academia.

Visualising law, as we have attempted to do in this book by means of charts, provides a very different perspective. It gives an idea of what the blueprint of the edifice of Union law would look like. Not unlike architecture, the basic concepts seem misleadingly simple but the challenge lies in establishing the connections between the concepts. That is what this book seeks to achieve. At the same time - like “real” blueprints - any picture of the law is an abstract simplification, and is no substitute for conventional methods of study. Just like an architect who needs to know his or her building materials and to use them properly, a lawyer needs to know the law, and needs to know how to interpret and apply general rules and principles to a specific case.

The charts contained in this book serve several different, though largely overlapping purposes.

Firstly, the charts are intended as a learning tool. Most people tend to understand (and memorise) more easily complex or abstract concepts if presented with some form of visual aid. For those who have previously studied EU competition law, perhaps as part of the typical curriculum of a law degree, and are in need of a refresher course, a concise and systematic overview of the current state of EU competition law condensed into chart form mapping out developments and changes in the law will prove a very useful and handy resource, a “vade mecum” perhaps. For non-lawyers or students taking courses in EU competition law for the first time, charts are an excellent way of getting a broad overview of the various topics before going into the detail of the relevant principles, case law and secondary legislation, thus making learning more effective.

Secondly, these charts can be applied as a presentation tool. Whether explaining an issue of EU competition law to a client, making a presentation before the board of directors of a company, or lecturing EU competition law in a university, visual tools can be extremely useful, and especially so in the (often complex) field of EU competition law.

The overall structure of this book is designed to guide the (uninitiated) reader towards a specific legal issue through “topic charts” and “decision trees”. In this way, the core of the body of primary EU competition law, secondary EU competition law, and case law of the European Court of Justice becomes accessible in a quick and practical way. For practitioners and academics who already possess specialised knowledge of EU competition law the decision trees can be used to provide a comprehensive checklist.

This project would not have been possible without the help of many people. Regarding the contents of the charts, we are particularly grateful to Mr. Friso van Harinxma, Head of Legal at Shell Nederland Verkoopmaatschappij, as well as to Christa Tobler’s colleagues at Leiden University for their help, notably Prof. Piet Jan Slot and Ms. Elsbeth Beumer. Furthermore, we benefited from the personal advice of several officials of competition authorities.

We are also thankful to many friends active in law firms and corporate legal departments who through their continuous critical review and feedback on the draft work were instrumental in making this book despite its academic ambition into what is hopefully “easy reading” for busy international lawyers. We are particularly grateful to Mr. Daniel de Feydeau, General Counsel Group Law at Schindler, as well as to Ms. Daphne Yong-d’Hervé, Senior Policy Manager of the ICC Commission on Competition, for providing and helping to obtain expert input.

Helpful comments on the substance of the charts were also received from people who did other important work for the project. We were fortunate to have Mr. Stephen Moran, barrister-at-law from Ireland, as our language editor. He had a tough job in ensuring the proper use of the English language in this work and in checking that the text indeed expresses what it is supposed to express. Moreover, being proficient in the book’s subject matter himself, his contribution went far beyond proofreading. For additional language advice, we are grateful to Ms Sheena Bruce from Leiden University.

On the production side, we would most particularly like to thank our assistant Mr Samuel Schweizer, who dedicated many hours to the fine-tuning of the graphic work and the tables and also supported the works with his legal knowledge. We are extremely grateful to Dr. Ádám Frank of the publishing house HVG-ORAC

in Budapest for taking on the challenge of publishing this book despite the many challenges attributable to its special nature, including in particular the printing of documents prepared with complex software, rather than printing straight text as in most books.

Finally, we are grateful for the support of Leiden University's research institute, the E.M. Meijers Instituut voor Rechtwetenschappelijk Onderzoek, for agreeing to be associated with the publication of this book.

The book was developed within the framework of the EUR-Charts Project (<http://www.eur-charts.eu>) and reflects the state of law on 1 January 2011. It is supplemented by its companion website, which comprises a number of exercises as well as a comprehensive set of reference legal texts which are available for download and also informs about updates and corrigenda.

Readers who wish to benefit from a broad embodiment of charts on the full range of topics of EU law are referred to the book "Essential EU law in Charts" and its companion booklet "Essential EU Law in Text", both published in 2010 also with HVG-ORAC under the EUR-Charts Project.

We would like to dedicate this book to our respective families.

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