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Directorate for Financial and Enterprise Affairs
COMPETITION COMMITTEE

Annual Report on Competition Policy Developments in Sweden

-- 2023 --

This report is submitted by Sweden to the Competition Committee FOR INFORMATION.

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Sweden

1. Executive Summary

1.1. Anti-competitive agreements

1. During 2023, the Swedish Competition Authority (“SCA”) concluded three investigations involving alleged horizontal anticompetitive agreements. One of these resulted in the imposition of fines for a finding of an infringement. Another case was closed after the parties modified their behaviour.
2. Four investigations of alleged vertical anticompetitive agreements were concluded in 2023. One of these involved the imposition of fines for a finding of an infringement, while three involved commitments.

1.2. Abuse of dominance

3. The SCA concluded four investigations of alleged abuse of dominance in 2023. Three of these were closed after parties made voluntary changes of behaviour.

1.3. Mergers

4. 82 mergers were notified to the SCA in 2023. One was cleared with commitments in phase 1. Two phase 2 cases were concluded, including one where the parties withdrew their notification and one clearance.

1.4. Advocacy and competition research

5. The SCA submitted 171 responses to official consultations from the Swedish government and other public bodies, for example including consultations on proposals regarding enhancing preparedness for societal crises, as well as the question of the financing of the universal postal service.
6. The SCA published a series of reports on the question of competition in times of crisis. It also began work on a wide-ranging study of the food sector which will result in the publication of a report in 2024.
7. The SCA paid out just over SEK 5.4 million to 7 ongoing research projects in 2023 and granted SEK 2.9 million to 6 new research projects in 2023. It also organized its annual “pros and cons” research conference on the topic of inflation and competition policy.

1.5. Changes to competition law and policies

8. Revised EU Horizontal Block Exemption Regulations and Guidelines for the assessment of horizontal cooperation agreements were adopted by the European Commission in June 2023.
9. An inquiry proposed amendments to the competition regime to grant the SCA powers related to the EU’s Digital Markets Act and Foreign Subsidies Regulation.
10. An inquiry was appointed to look into the question of possible new competition tools as well as new disclosure requirements for mergers that fall below the mandatory

thresholds. The inquiry will also review the national competitive neutrality rules in the Swedish competition regime to ensure that they are effective.

2. Changes to competition law and policies, proposed or adopted

2.1. Summary of new legal provisions of competition law and related legislation

11. The revised EU Horizontal Block Exemption Regulations and Guidelines for the assessment of horizontal cooperation agreements were adopted by the European Commission in June 2023.

2.2. Government proposals for new legislation

12. An inquiry proposed certain amendments to the competition regime with reference to the entering into force of the EU Digital Markets Act and Foreign Subsidies Regulation. The proposed amendments include granting the SCA powers to investigate non-compliance with the DMA, as well as powers to assist the European Commission in investigative measures. The proposals were consulted upon during the autumn of 2023. At time of writing the government has not yet published its own proposals deriving from the inquiry's findings.

13. In 2023 the Swedish government appointed an inquiry to look into the question of possible new competition tools that could complement the current competition rules and address structural competition problems that concern entire markets or sectors. The inquiry will also look into the question of whether new duties should be imposed on companies to disclose mergers that fall below the mandatory thresholds. Additionally, the inquiry will review the national competitive neutrality rules in the Swedish competition regime to ensure that they are effective, for example with regard to investigative and decision-making powers. The inquiry will report back at the start of 2025.

3. Enforcement of competition laws and policies

3.1. Action against anti-competitive practices, including agreements and abuses of dominant positions

3.1.1. Summary of activities of the SCA

Anti-competitive agreements and abuse of dominant position

14. In 2023, the SCA concluded 11 prioritized competition investigations into suspected infringements of Chapter 2, Article 1 and 7 of the Swedish Competition Act, and Articles 101 and 102 TFEU.

3.1.2. Description of significant cases, including those with international implications

Horizontal agreements

- Temperature-controlled road transport

15. Two companies were found by the SCA to have breached the rules on anticompetitive agreements by dividing customers in northern Sweden between 2011 and

2021 through a collaboration agreement for temperature-controlled road transport. The agreement involved the undertakings not competing for specific customers. In July 2023, the SCA imposed a SEK 7,000,000 fine on one undertaking, while the other undertaking received full immunity from fines for reporting the violation.

- Supply of bread to grocery retailers

16. The SCA investigated two companies for suspected anticompetitive coordination in bread sales to grocery retailers, focusing on concerns of market sharing. Despite initial suspicions, the SCA found no conclusive evidence of improper coordination and closed the case in July 2023.

- Electric bike rental

17. The SCA conducted an investigation into the conduct of a number of electric scooter companies after the companies jointly communicated a decision not to apply for permits to provide rental bikes to the city of Stockholm. As a result of the investigation, each of the companies involved distanced itself from improper contacts between competitors and introduced or intensified internal competition compliance efforts. As a result, the SCA closed its investigation in December 2023.

Vertical agreements

- Plumbing products

18. In 2021, two companies made the SCA aware of suspicions of retail price maintenance in the market for plumbing supplies. The resellers alleged that the supplier limited them from independently setting prices of certain products. It was alleged that this was done by limiting the resellers' ability to market and sell products online under a certain price level. The SCA decided that the company had enforced a pricing policy with a minimum sales price over a two-and-a-half-year period, monitored compliance, and urged adherence to the pricing policy. In a decision issued in December 2023, the SCA fined the company SEK 16.9 million. The case is currently subject to appeal in the courts.

- Online airline ticket sales

19. In 2020, a trade organisation submitted a complaint to the SCA regarding an airline's policy for sales of flight tickets. The suspicions concerned contractual terms that limited online travel agencies' ability to market discounts to customers looking for flights online. To address the competition concerns that emerged during the SCA's investigation, the airline offered commitments not to restrict how online travel agencies could advertise discounts on flight tickets. The SCA accepted the airline's commitments and closed the investigation in July 2023. The commitments apply for five years and are aimed at promoting more significant price competition, benefiting both online travel agencies and consumers.

- Beer sales

20. The SCA investigated suspected anticompetitive agreements between two large brewery companies and actors in the hotel, restaurant and cafe (horeca) sector. The investigation looked into whether requirements of certain volume commitments and other conditions that encouraged customers to concentrate their purchases to a large extent with their main supplier collectively had an anticompetitive effect. The breweries offered commitments, effective until November 2029, to address the concerns. The SCA accepted the commitments from each of the breweries and closed the cases in October 2023.

Abuse of a dominant position

- Subscription services for digital books

21. The SCA investigated suspicions that a vertically integrated digital book provider had abused its dominant position by imposing unfair terms for the access to its digital books in relation to a competitor on the market for subscription services. The SCA investigated concerns of a risk of potential foreclosure on several levels of the supply chain in an already concentrated market. In mid-November 2023, the company adjusted its behaviour, thus alleviating potential competition concerns. The SCA also concluded that a continued investigation may risk affecting contractual negotiations that were ongoing between the undertakings concerned. The SCA therefore closed the investigation in December 2023.

- Shareholder data

22. The SCA investigated a central securities depository's conduct concerning the supply of shareholding data for Swedish companies. The behaviour under investigation involved the conditions for accessing data to be used in analysis products that compete with products by the central securities depository itself. The investigation also looked at the question of pricing towards the securities depository's customers. The investigation looked into suspicions of refusal to supply, margin squeeze or unfair trading conditions. During the investigation, the company in question made certain changes to its access conditions and pricing, leading to the SCA closing its investigation in December 2023.

23. The SCA subsequently wrote to the government proposing that a change in the regulatory framework should be considered to oblige central securities depositories to provide public registers of shareholders digitally, since this would make it easier for market actors who wish to use the data.

- Shunting services for train carriages

24. The SCA investigated an alleged abuse of a dominant position concerning railway logistics and freight transport services. The allegations concerned a state-owned company which is the only provider of shunting services in Sweden. The company also provides freight railway transportation services. The complainant was another freight railway transportation provider that had been denied access to shunting services.

25. The SCA investigated the conditions for access to shunting services in Sweden and how these affect the ability to compete on the freight railway transportation market. During the investigation, the Swedish Transport Agency launched an initiative which meant that the agency itself would take on the role as service provider for elements of the service. The SCA concluded that this initiative would create the conditions for a competitively neutral access to shunting services, and closed its investigation in March 2023. Should the Swedish Transport Agency's initiative not solve the competition problems identified on the market, the SCA will consider taking further action.

- Real estate pricing data

26. In 2021, the SCA received a complaint of an alleged abuse of dominance on the market for statistics on real estate sales. The company subject to the investigation gathers, compiles and publishes information about the housing market. The company had had an agreement since 2009 to supply another company with data gathered about the housing market. Based on these data, the latter company produced a housing price index used by a number of customers. In the spring of 2020, the data provider served notice to terminate the agreement, and at the same time communicated its decision to no longer supply data with publishing rights in accordance with previous agreements.

27. The SCA adopted an interim decision in July 2021 to order the company to continue supplying the data while its investigation was ongoing, since the authority deemed that there were particular grounds to do so and that it was likely that the refusal to supply data amounted to an abuse of dominance. Upon appeal of the interim decision, the Patent and Market Court sided with the SCA, and the interim decision was not appealed further to the appeals court.

28. During the continued investigation, the data provider pledged to continue providing data to the other company, though not for the purposes of making the price index public. The price index could continue to be referred to by customers as long as this was done in a broader context.

29. The SCA's investigation showed that the data was of high quality and that the price index was important to various market actors. However, the evidence gathered did not clearly support the assertion that making the price index public on the company's website was crucial for those actors' demand for the company's services. The SCA therefore closed the case in January 2023, meaning that the interim decision no longer applied.

Anticompetitive sales by public entities

- Cleaning services

30. Under national rules on anticompetitive sales by public entities, the SCA investigated a public company's pricing of cleaning services in several grocery stores. Preliminary findings gave clear indications of pricing below cost. The company indicated that it would take measures to prevent such conduct in the future. Owing to the way the competitive neutrality rules are designed, it was not possible for the SCA to accept formal commitments combined with the risk of penalty payments for failure to comply. The SCA closed the investigation in June 2023, but in its decision it clearly communicated the importance of state-owned actors taking strong measures to prevent their pricing from restricting competition.

31. In light of this and other cases where the rules on anticompetitive public sales activities have been found to be insufficient, the SCA wrote to the government proposing that the legal framework be reviewed. The government subsequently announced a review of the rules, see 1.1 above.

3.1.3. Summary of activities of courts

Anti-competitive agreements

32. As stated in last year's report, in 2022 the SCA adopted a decision imposing fines on taxi undertakings for anticompetitive agreements in connection to a procurement for mobility service transportation. Both parties appealed the decision, but in February 2023 the Patent and Market Court sided with the SCA and rejected the appeals.

33. In December 2022, the SCA adopted a decision imposing fines for an anticompetitive agreement by way of market division between two undertakings in the sanitation sector. One undertaking was fined approximately SEK 1.2 million, while the other was granted full immunity. The SCA's decision was appealed to the Patent and Market Court, however the undertaking subsequently withdrew its appeal in April 2023 meaning that the SCA's decision stood.

3.2. Mergers and Acquisitions

3.2.1. Statistics on number, size and type of mergers notified and/or controlled under competition laws

Table 1.

The following table shows statistics for the period 2019-2023:

Notified Mergers	82	121	135	80	74
Of which the SCA requested on particular grounds	0	1	0	0	1
Of which voluntary notifications	1	2	1	1	4
Total number of cases closed in phase 1	83	115	135	73	76
Of which with Phase 1 commitments	1	0	0	1	1
Number of decisions to launch a phase 2 investigation	1	3	3	1	4
Total number of cases closed in phase 2	2	2	4	1	3
Of which withdrawn by parties in phase 2	1	0	0	0	0
Of which phase 2 commitments	0	0	2	0	0
Of which prohibited in phase 2	0	0	0	0	1
Of which cleared without remedies in phase 2	1	2	2	1	2

3.2.2. Summary of significant cases

Digital subscription services

34. The SCA assessed a merger concerning digital subscription services for magazines and newspapers. During the investigation, concerns were expressed from competing publishers that the acquiring company would be able to prioritise its own titles through the subscription services that were being acquired. The parties offered a voluntary commitment to address the competition concerns, meaning that the merger could be cleared subject to commitments in phase 1.

Industrial sanitation services

35. The SCA conducted a phase 2 investigation into a merger in the industrial sanitation services sector. The SCA came to the preliminary finding that the companies would acquire significant market power in parts of northern Sweden. At the same time, there were some uncertainties about particular issues that would have required more detailed investigation than was possible within the legal time limits for completing a merger review. As the investigation up to the point of the legal time limit for the phase 2 investigation had not shown to a sufficient degree that the merger would significantly impede effective competition, the merger was cleared.

4. The role of competition authorities in the formulation and implementation of other policies, e.g. regulatory reform, trade and industrial policies

4.1. Advocacy

36. One of the SCA's tasks is to identify obstacles that may restrict or distort effective competition in public and private operations. The SCA presents proposals with the aim of

opening up markets to competition, initiating regulatory reforms, as well as monitoring developments within the area of competition. The SCA makes proposals for improving competition in reports, responses to official consultations and official communications to the Swedish Government. The SCA also provides comments and opinions to other public authorities that seek the SCA's views on a particular investigation or changes to the regulatory framework.

4.1.1. Reports

37. The SCA published several reports as part of its advocacy activities in 2023. A strategic focus area was competition in times of crisis, and a compilation of thematic analysis reports was published in July 2023. Among others, an analysis was made of the energy and financial markets, as well as the issues of mergers and cooperation between undertakings in times of crisis.

4.1.2. Sector Inquiries

38. In June 2023, the government assigned the SCA the task of analysing the competitive conditions in the food chain and how prices have developed in relation to costs, for example within the grocery market. Prior to the government assignment, the SCA had begun a broad inquiry into the food sector as part of its work on competition in times of crises. The SCA has published results as they have become available, including reports into competition in the egg supply chain and competition in the primary production market published in 2023. The inquiry will be concluded in 2024.

39. The government also assigned the SCA to look at the question of other sectors where large price rises could be a sign of weak competition. In line with a further government assignment, the SCA began an analysis of the road fuel market in 2023 that will result in a report in 2024.

4.1.3. Responses to official consultations

40. In 2023, the SCA issued 171 responses to official consultations, 117 of which were requested by the Swedish government and 54 by other public authorities. By providing opinions on proposals made in reports and other inquiries, the SCA can assist the government and other authorities in the preparation of proposed legal amendments and decisions. Below is a selection of the SCA's responses to official consultations in 2023.

41. Several responses to official consultations addressed proposals aimed at enhancing preparedness for societal crises. In response to a state inquiry into a model for supply preparedness, the SCA expressed support for proposals emphasizing the importance of ensuring that goods and services are purchased according to procurement rules and in an efficient manner. The SCA also stressed the importance of ensuring that the design of procurement procedures in situations with a higher level of preparedness, crisis or war do not create disproportionate effects on markets and competition during non-crisis times.

42. The SCA also submitted a consultation response regarding a proposal to allow the Swedish Food Agency to redistribute water purification chemicals during severe shortages. While not opposing the proposal, the SCA stressed that redistribution decisions by the state are a particularly onerous measure that should be taken as a last resort.

43. Concerning Swedish power grid proposals, particularly the replacement of power reserves with a capacity market, the SCA raised concerns that the proposal could lead to potential price increases or the strategic withholding of capacity. The SCA recommended further exploration of alternative mechanisms to stimulate investment.

44. In its response to an inquiry regarding funding models for the future of the universal postal service, the SCA emphasized the importance of a thorough evaluation of funding needs before considering state aid for the universal postal service. It also argued that some form of regulation to facilitate access to the postal service's infrastructure could foster competition within the postal sector, noting that the question of access regulation has not been adequately explored in Sweden. The SCA cautioned that the proposals could affect the incentives for existing competitors to expand their operations and for new actors to enter into the market, potentially leading to market exit over time. The SCA expressed that procurement is preferable to subsidies when financing future postal services and supported retaining provisions in the Postal Services Act allowing for the procurement of all or parts of the universal postal service.

4.1.4. Research

45. The SCA supports research into its areas of responsibility, including financing research projects. In 2023, the SCA received 28 applications for funding, of which 19 had a competition focus, 5 had a procurement focus, and 4 had both a competition and procurement focus. Of the 28 applications, the SCA granted SEK 2.9 million to 6 new projects in 2023, of which 3 projects involved competition research and 3 involved procurement research. In addition, the SCA paid out just over SEK 5.4 million to 7 ongoing projects for 2023.

Projects that received funding in 2023.

46. The following is an account of ongoing research projects in the area of competition law and economics.

Ongoing competition-related research projects

- Anna Tzanaki, Competition Compliance Programmes: A Comparative Law & Economics Analysis.
- Magnus Strand, Competition disputes beyond harmonisation: A comparative European study.
- Maksym Khomenko, Optimal Design and Regulations in Healthcare. (note, no funding during 2023)
- Marcel Garz, Competition, multimarket contact, and quality of local newspaper coverage.
- Matilda Orth, Prices, margins and competition in the food market in uncertain times.
- Niklas Rudholm, How does algorithmic price-setting affect the likelihood of price coordination?
- Petri Kuoppamäki, Nordic Competition Law Conference in Helsinki 2023.
- Richard Friberg, Competition mini-courses. (note, no funding during 2023).
- Vladimir Bastidas, Platform envelopment in the online pharmacy industry: an effects-based approach.
- Xavier Groussot, The Application and Impact of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights in Competition Law, the Digital Single Market and Sweden.

Commissioned research

47. The SCA commissions research when it sees a direct need to investigate or highlight specific issues within competition and/or procurement. The results are then published in a special report series for commissioned research. The SCA assigns a reference group to each project to provide quality assurance for the study. The reference groups consist of individuals with special expertise in the field in question. The SCA's ambition is for the reports to be founded on solid academic grounds and to be written in such a way that non-specialists can also understand the content.

48. In 2023, approximately SEK 2.1 million was allocated for commissioned research within the fields of competition and procurement.

49. Published or ongoing commissioned research reports on competition during 2023 are as follows:

- Christian Jörgensen and Eric Rehn, Recent price rises for food and competition in the food chain (ongoing).
- Jenny Bäckstrand, Yinef Pardillo Baez and Movin Frank Sequira, Alternative forms of distribution in the food market (ongoing).
- Lars Persson and Pehr-Johan Norbäck, The introduction of regulatory sandboxes to stimulate small-scale innovative businesses: How do they affect competition? (published).
- Nanna Fukushima and Roger Pyddoke, The expansion of charging infrastructure for electric cars (ongoing).
- Pehr-Johan Norbäck, Sten Nyberg and Mats Bergman, Competition in Sweden – quantitative measures (ongoing).
- Thomas Tangerås, Competition in the Swedish electricity market (published).
- Ulf Johansson and Jens Hultman, The use of private label products by food chains and their impact on competition (ongoing).

Council for Research Issues

50. The SCA has a designated Council for Research Issues, which consists primarily of external academic researchers within the fields of economics, law and business administration. The Council's task is to stimulate research in the fields of competition and procurement, and to provide the SCA and the National Agency for Public Procurement with findings from developments, primarily in the economic and legal sciences, which may be of significance to the agencies' activities.

- Conference on "Pros and Cons"

51. Since 2002, with the exception of 2021, the SCA has organised an annual international conference on the theme of "Pros and Cons". The conference is organised to disseminate and deepen knowledge about key topics in the field of competition and to enable experts, industry, regulators and researchers in competition-related issues to meet, exchange ideas and discuss views on current issues. The topic of the 2023 conference was the Pros and Cons of Fighting Inflation with Competition Policy. Around 70 invited participants were in attendance, as well as a selection of employees from the SCA who took advantage of the opportunity for further training.

- Essay contest

52. In an effort to promote interest in competition and procurement matters among students, the SCA holds an annual essay contest. The contest is open for all topics that are relevant to the activities of the SCA. In 2023, there were 37 entries submitted, and 6 of these were awarded prizes, sharing a total of SEK 100,000.

4.2. Communication and knowledge

53. Part of the SCA's task is to promote competition and provide appropriate information for companies and other stakeholders regarding important decisions, implementation of the rules and the content of these rules.

4.2.1. Ongoing focus on digital communication

54. The SCA continued to prioritize digital communication throughout 2023. It communicated via its website, through digital newsletters, podcasts and social media, traditional media, meetings and industry forums, and in several different arenas both in Sweden and internationally.

Internal communication

55. Since the SCA's staff have been offered to sign an agreement with the SCA on the possibility of working remotely up to two days a week, a well-functioning internal communication have been crucial for the employees working from home.

The SCA's website

56. Konkurrensverket.se is the SCA's main platform and channel for digital communication, a gathering place for news and information about its operations. In 2023, work continued on updating content and structure with a focus on recipients and user and accessibility adaptation.

Social media

57. The SCA regularly utilizes LinkedIn and complementary channels to convey news and create interest and engagement regarding related to the authority's areas of operation. Regarding webinars and live broadcast conferences, the SCA has continued to increase the production of moving picture material published in its intranet and its social media channels.

Digital newsletter

58. During the year, the SCA has continuously published a newsletter that addresses both public procurement and competition issues. The newsletter is published bi-weekly, and provides approximately 2000 subscribers with up-to-date information. In 2023, 21 editions of the electronic newsletter were sent out.

Podcasts

59. The SCA continued to develop its podcast throughout 2023. The podcast, which has the title "Konkurrenten" (The Competitor), addresses relevant competition and procurement-related issues. A total of 4 new episodes were published in 2023. The participation of staff from the authority in the podcasts has contributed to the sharing of valuable knowledge on relevant issues.

Interactive guidance

60. The SCA's interactive digital guidance is an effective way to provide a target audience with help and support on various issues. The guidance promotes a better understanding of rules and regulations and is greatly appreciated by its users. The SCA's digital guidance package is accessible on its website and includes guidance on anti-competitive sales operations by public entities, collaboration in the public procurement process as well as guidance for industry associations.

4.3. International work*4.3.1. ECN*

61. Within the European Competition Network (ECN), the SCA cooperates closely with the European Commission and the competition authorities of the Member States in the application of Articles 101 and 102 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, TFEU.

62. During the year, the SCA participated in five oral hearings and five meetings of the Advisory Committee concerning the application of Articles 101 and 102 TFEU. Similarly, NCAs are required to consult the European Commission before taking decisions applying Articles 101 and 102 TFEU. In 2023, the SCA consulted the European Commission prior to four decisions. Through the ECN cooperation, the competition authorities within the network can assist each other and exchange information in investigations of suspected competition infringements, as well as ask general law enforcement and policy questions through written enquiries. In 2023, the SCA sent six requests and responded to 106 general inquiries from other authorities in the network.

63. The SCA has also exchanged knowledge and information within the framework of meetings of the working and sectoral groups that have been formed to facilitate discussions and exchange of experience between officials from the competition authorities. During the year, the SCA participated in 45 such meetings.

4.3.2. Co-operation on merger control

64. Cooperation also takes place at an EU level in the area of mergers. In 2023, the SCA participated in five oral hearings and in 10 meetings of the Advisory Committee regarding the European Commission's merger cases.

65. In addition, the national competition authorities and the European Commission have a working group tasked with promoting increased cooperation on merger investigations. In 2023, the SCA participated in three of the working group meetings.

4.3.3. Digital Markets Act

66. In accordance with the Digital Markets Act, a Digital Markets Advisory Committee (DMAC) has been set up within the EU. Sweden is represented at the meetings of the Committee by representatives of the SCA. In 2023, the SCA's employees participated in four of the Committee's meetings.

4.3.4. EU competition policy

67. A review of various parts of the EU competition acquis is currently underway. In 2023, the SCA actively participated in this process. Among other things, the SCA has contributed with views on updates to the Block Exemption Regulations and related guidelines for horizontal agreements, the European Commission Notice on the Definition

of Relevant Market, and to the development of new guidelines on the application of Article 102 TFEU. The SCA has also contributed to the European Commission's evaluation of Council Regulation 1/2003.

68. In May 2023, the SCA co-organised the European Competition Day in Sweden during the Swedish presidency of the Council of the European Union.

4.3.5. Nordic cooperation

69. The Nordic competition authorities have developed close cooperation over a long period of time. In addition to the exchange of experience between the authorities and joint market studies, the Nordic competition authorities also have the opportunity to exchange information and assist each other in investigations of suspected infringements of the competition rules and in merger cases.

70. In September, the SCA hosted the Nordic competition meeting, which was held in Marstrand. At the meeting, group discussions were held on the themes of interim decisions, algorithms and the food market. In addition, the Directors General discussed, among other things, competition law and artificial intelligence, as well as the question of whether competition authorities have appropriate tools to safeguard competition for consumers. The issue of inflation and the role of competition authorities was also discussed at the meeting of Directors General in Iceland in May 2023.

71. A number of meetings were also held in the working groups set up to facilitate the exchange of experience between employees from the Nordic competition authorities. The cartel working group met in Reykjavik in June. The Chief Economists also met in June in Bergen, and the chief legal officers met in Helsinki in October. The Nordic heads of communications held a meeting in Helsinki on 25–26 May. In Bergen in November 2023, the first meeting of a new network for the exchange of experience and knowledge sharing regarding the collection and analysis of tender data was held.

4.3.6. OECD

72. The SCA participates in the Competition Committee of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The Director General of the SCA was re-elected as a member of the Committee's bureau for the year 2023.

73. The SCA submitted written contributions to the meetings in June and December on the competition welfare standard, competition and sport, as well as the powers, resources and tools of competition authorities in the light of increased digitalization.

4.3.7. International Competition Network

74. Within the framework of the ICN's Agency Effectiveness Working Group, the SCA organized a webinar in May 2023 on how digital tools can be used to streamline competition law investigations. Within the same working group, the SCA's employees also participated in a workshop aimed at chief economists. This workshop was held in Bergen, in conjunction with the Nordic meeting of Chief Economists. During ICN's annual conference in October 2023, the Director General of the SCA participated in a panel discussion on digital tools and resources. During the same conference, the SCA's employees participated in sessions on sustainability and merger review.

75. In October 2023, the SCA was appointed to be responsible for project leadership within the framework of the ICN Unilateral Conduct Working Group. The project aims to gather the experience of competition authorities on the application of the competition rules in relation to exclusivity agreements and to update the ICN's handbook in this area.

5. Resources

5.1. Resources overall

5.1.1. Annual budget (in SEK and USD)

- 2023: SEK 186,846 million / USD 17.6 million, including public procurement supervision.¹
- 2022: SEK 169,438 million / USD 16.7 million, including public procurement supervision.²

5.1.2. Number of employees (person-years)

76. The average number of employees during 2023 was 197, while the number of full-time equivalent employees was 164. Of these, 90 worked on competition issues, and 87 more specifically as non-administrative staff. Among the non-administrative competition staff, there were 43 lawyers, 31 economists and 13 with other types of functions.³

5.2. Human resources (person-years) applied to:

5.2.1. Enforcement against anticompetitive practices / merger review and enforcement

77. 85 non-administrative staff worked with competition issues (relevant staff in the Cartels and Mergers Unit, Market Abuse Unit, Communications and IT Unit, Legal and International Affairs Unit, Litigation Unit, and Chief Economist's Unit).

5.2.2. Advocacy efforts

78. 3 non-administrative staff worked with competition issues in the field of advocacy.

¹ Average annual rate (aggregate) 2023, Swedish Riksbank

² Average annual rate (aggregate) 2022, Swedish Riksbank

³ In previous years a total head count was reported for these values, whereas this year's report uses full-time equivalents for all values. This explains why certain numbers appear to have decreased, when in fact staff numbers have increased year on year.