



Key Achievements of Sofia Competition Forum *Balkan Countries*

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Sofia Competition Forum (SCF)

- The Sofia Competition Forum (SCF) is a **joint initiative** of the United Nations Trade and Development Organization (UNCTAD) and the Bulgarian Commission for the Protection of Competition (CPC).
- The Memorandum of Cooperation was signed on July 11, 2012 in Geneva.



SLOVENIA

CROATIA

BOSNIA &
HERCEGOVINA

MONTENEGRO

ALBANIA

KOSOVO

SERBIA

MACEDONIA

ROMANIA

SCF
Sofia Competition Forum

BULGARIA

 **AUTORITETI I
KONKURENCËS**

Balkan Countries

- The forum was initially conceived as a regional initiative for the Authorities of the **Balkan countries** with beneficiaries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia.
- This forum was open to other countries as well.
- The Georgian Competition Authority joined the forum in 2014

Sofia Declaration

- The first meeting of the Competition Authorities of the Balkan countries (Competition Authority of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia):
- was held on November 12, 2012 in Sofia, Bulgaria.

Sofia Declaration

Purpose and importance of the Forum

- The Forum seeks to foster co-operation and the development of regional ties in the Balkan region:
 1. to ensure a **uniform** application of competition rules;
 2. to assist countries in the region in **drafting and enforcing** competition law;
 3. to provide the regional competition authorities with a **platform** to exchange information and expertise in the field of competition policy.

The cooperation aims

- The cooperation aims to focus on:
 1. **Improving** competition legislation;
 2. **Strengthening** the capacity of institutions for effective implementation of competition law and policy;
 3. **EU accession** negotiation process.

The format of SCF

- **Periodic meetings** where issues and aspects of competition are addressed;
- Completion of **questionnaires** on the basis of which materials have been drafted, which bring legal and procedural aspects of competition treatment.

Albanian Competition Authority (ACA)

- ACA has actively supported the functioning, establishment and expansion of the Sofia Competition Forum, being an active participant in this network.
- Many times at a senior management level, through discussions and **bringing Albanian cases**, but also
- In providing **contributions** and **information** according to topics and issues raised.

The contribution of SCF

- Based on the contributions that the authorities of the region have given, the following have been **drafted**:
 1. *Comparative overview of the SCF - Competition Regimes in the field of procedural fairness;*
 2. *Comparative overview of SCF- Competition regimes in the field of sanctions and leniency;*
 3. *Comparative overview of the Balkan competition regimes;*
 4. *Comparative overview of the Balkan Competition regimes of inspections on spot.*

Topics of meetings during the years

- The need to strengthen the capacity of new competition agencies in the Western Balkans;
- Competition advocacy, a tool for developing an effective competition regime;
- Publication and transparency in the implementation of competition rules;
- Public procurement agreements;
- The link between competition policy and regulatory sectors;
- Procedures during surprise inspections;
- International cooperation in the field of sanctions and fine relief program;
- Exchange of information between competitors, etc.

Benefits of the Albanian Competition Authority

- To promote and strength **the long-term relations** of competition institutions in the region.
- To support the implementation of competition **legislation in line with EU requirements.**
- To enable the **exchange** of information, materials, legal framework and experience in the field of competition.
- To provide **assistance** regarding proper access to the investigation of antitrust cases or concentration control procedures.
- To help strengthen **institutional capacity** and increase expertise, increasing professionalism in reviewing and analyzing competition cases, in line with EU best practices.

Cooperation during Covid-19

- Regional cooperation between competing authorities continued during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The Albanian Competition Authority, in a considerable number of markets which it has investigated during 2020, has also requested the experience of the counterpart Authorities in the region, Through **Request for Information (RFI)**.

Some markets investigated

- **The market** of wholesale and retail of **pre-medical pharmaceutical products** (mask, disinfectant gel, alcohol).
- Healthcare & Hospital market for **the prices of the tests** that private laboratories apply when testing the **COVID-19**: (a) Serology test, and (b) Molecular Biological Test SARS-COV-2 tampon (RT-PCR).
- Retail Market - **Telecommunication (Mobile)**.
- Retail Market - **Supermarket Chain**.
- The **economic activity** Football Association.

Benchmark of Balkan Countries

- The Balkan countries have more or less the same economic development.
- In this regard, the investigation in some markets has also referred to the benchmark in the Balkan region.
- *The economic activity Albanian Football Association – ticket price at football matches.*
- *Banking sector – the interest on deposits and loans, for the same banks which have their branches in the Balkan region.*
- *Retail Market in Telecommunication (Mobile) – prepaid bundles.*

Thank You !