

# Antitrust: Commission confirms unannounced inspections in the metal packaging sector

The Commission has concerns that the companies involved may have violated EU antitrust rules that prohibit cartels and restrictive business practices ([Article 101](#) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union). The Commission officials were accompanied by their counterparts from the relevant national competition authorities.

The German Competition Authority (Bundeskartellamt) initially investigated the conduct of a number of undertakings active in this sector and found that the suspected anticompetitive behaviour may have extended to markets outside Germany, in several Member States. In line with EU antitrust rules on cooperation with the National Competition Authorities, the Commission will take over and further investigate the case. The Commission welcomes this example of good cooperation within the European Competition Network.

Unannounced inspections are a preliminary step into suspected anticompetitive practices. The fact that the Commission carries out such inspections does not mean that the companies are guilty of anti-competitive behaviour nor does it prejudge the outcome of the investigation itself. The Commission respects the rights of defence, in particular the right of companies to be heard in antitrust proceedings.

There is no legal deadline to complete inquiries into anticompetitive conduct. Their duration depends on a number of factors, including the complexity of each case, the extent to which the undertakings concerned cooperate with the Commission and the exercise of the rights of defence.