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**Mateusz Błachucki, *International Cooperation, Competition Authorities and Transnational Networks*,
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In recent decades, the functioning of transnational networks of public administrative bodies and their impact on national legal orders has become an important issue, not only in theory but also in practice. Transcending national borders, the activity of these networks has become one of the key levels of global governance and one of the main driving forces behind the increasing harmonisation of the relevant rules applied in different countries. This phenomenon also applies to competition law and the authorities that monitor its observance, which is the subject of Professor Mateusz Błachucki's latest book.

The book aims to clarify the legal nature of the transnational competition networks (TCNs) that bring together national competition authorities, to establish their typology and to analyse and classify the forms of cooperation between national competition authorities within these networks. The book consists of 11 chapters, which the author himself divides into four main parts in the introduction (unfortunately, this division is not reflected in the table of contents). The first of these (chapter 2) introduces the reader to the concept of transnational competition networks. The second part (chapters 3–5) analyses the different types of networks, both those operating independently and those established within intergovernmental organisations at the global, continental, and regional levels. It provides a careful overview of the current state of affairs in this field, taking into account the reasons for the establishment of each network, its internal organisation, membership, field of activity, and its various forms. In the extensive third part (chapters 6–8), the author classifies the forms of cooperation between national competition authorities within supranational networks. This part of the work, which is perhaps the most comprehensive, appears to be particularly valuable for practitioners, who may find

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in its arguments for protecting their clients against possible infringements of their rights in connection with the activities of public authorities within such networks. Błachucki divides the forms of cooperation of transnational networks into three categories: soft, developed, and enhanced; depending on the level of cooperation and the involvement of national authorities in the activities of a given network. As he points out, soft cooperation involves the exchange of experience and administrative practices, the establishment of common standards of action, and their coordination through the use of soft law instruments such as guidelines or recommendations, as well as the verification of compliance with the standards adopted by the network. Developed cooperation is more advanced and includes, *inter alia*, the exchange of information on the initiation of proceedings, of classified information and of information and evidence to which the parties have consented, as well as mutual legal assistance. Finally, enhanced cooperation consists of the joint conduct of administrative proceedings and determination of the content of administrative decisions, and also the mutual recognition of administrative acts. The fourth part of the book (Chapters 9–11), which may be of most interest to non-lawyers, discusses issues related to the supervision of the activities of transnational competition networks and the prospects for the development of these networks, including the associated benefits and challenges. It also presents the conclusions of the overall analysis.

The author argues that in an increasingly interdependent world, cooperation between national authorities is becoming more and more necessary in order to meet the challenges associated with the enforcement of competition law. He stresses that networks are now an important catalyst for cross-border cooperation in this area, as well as for the development of competition law itself and the convergence of administrative practices. In his view, this is particularly important given the general reluctance of states to formalise such cooperation through, for example, the conclusion of international agreements or the creation of intergovernmental organisations. Błachucki points out that for many national authorities, transnational networks have become a natural area of activity, regardless of whether national laws in their jurisdictions clearly authorise such activity. He also notes a number of interesting processes taking place within the networks themselves and in the interactions between them, including competition for the limited resources allocated by national competition authorities, the mutual cannibalisation of some of them, or the decline of some of them due to the lack of the political support that accompanied their creation.

In addition to the benefits of cooperation within transnational competition networks, the book also discusses the challenges involved. Key among these seems to be the largely opaque nature of the networks' activities, which escape public scrutiny and political control by state authorities, while at the same time there is a lack

of clarity as to who should supervise the networks themselves and the activities of individual competition authorities within the respective networks. Błachucki notes that the current situation may lead to the creation of norms and the harmonisation of standards without any practical oversight by democratically-elected authorities, which may have a negative impact on the legitimacy of the activities of the networks and the national authorities. He also underscores that the voluntary nature of membership and participation in transnational competition networks – while having great advantages – may in some cases, especially politically charged ones, pose problems for real cooperation due to the lack of an institutional framework mandating cooperation in all situations; the difficulties in obtaining political support; and the absence of dispute resolution mechanisms.

One of the strengths of Błachucki's book is that it is highly interdisciplinary. Although it is based on dogmatic and doctrinal legal research, it is not limited to it but takes into account the insights of other disciplines – primarily international relations (especially the views of liberal institutionalists), but also international law, political science and economics. The author repeatedly refers to issues such as the erosion of state sovereignty, global governance, and the interplay of lawmaking and law enforcement processes at the national, supranational and international levels.

The main merits of the analysed work are undoubtedly its topicality; the importance of the issues raised; and the thoroughness and comprehensiveness of the analysis carried out, including the use of a wide range of literature. The book demonstrates the author's in-depth understanding of the issues raised. This is not surprising, as in addition to his theoretical knowledge, the author draws on his extensive experience in the Polish Office of Competition and Consumer Protection (UOKiK), including his personal involvement in the activities of the office within the framework of some of the networks discussed. The book is a valuable position not only for researchers and practitioners dealing with competition law or public administration, but also for those interested in international relations, and especially issues of global governance.