Comparative Legal Analysis of Some Aspects of Competition Law of Ukraine and EU Countries

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Abstract: On its path to European integration, Ukraine is constantly improving its antimonopoly legislation and strengthening its protection of economic competition. Before independence and the collapse of communism, Ukraine had a highly monopolized economy. The newly created Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine has, since its inception, had protection of economic competition as one of its main tasks. The purpose of this paper is to investigate the specific provisions of Ukrainian legislation and European legislation on the protection of economic competition, including the practice of its application. Poland and Germany were taken for comparison. On a case-by-case basis, this paper evaluates the role and importance of antitrust laws and the practical evaluation of the performance of competition authorities. The analysis of scientific works, legislation and specific administrative cases in these countries (based on the reports of the antitrust authorities for 2018) suggested that the activity of the Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine, in terms of quantitative and qualitative indicators, generally corresponds to the level of work of the respective European institutions. An additional impetus to this process may be given by a closer European integration process in the field of economic competition protection by extending the EU Directives on this matter to the territory of Ukraine.

Keywords: Antimonopoly law, antitrust law, competition law, comparative studies, Ukraine, EU.

INTRODUCTION

On its path to European integration, Ukraine is constantly improving its antitrust legislation and strengthening its protection of economic competition. Such measures are necessary for the development of a market economy. Before independence and the collapse of communism, Ukraine (along with the Czech Republic, Poland and several other post-socialist countries) had an economy that was aimed at heavy industry and was generally planned centrally. Since its establishment, the Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine has had protection of economic competition as one of its main tasks. Anti-monopoly laws adopted in 1993-1994, which are constantly being improved, laid the foundations for market surveillance, demonopolisation, import liberalization. restructuring monopolies, and merger control (Alpysbayev et al. 2020; Prentkovskis et al. 2010; Pukhkal et al. 2016; Pylypenko 2018).

In view of the above, it is important to look for ways to identify abuse of monopoly power and increase the effectiveness of our national antitrust policy. One way of finding such directions is to compare the antitrust legislation of Ukraine and the practice of its application with the legislation and practices of EU countries. From a theoretical and practical standpoint, the analysis of the practice of antitrust enforcement has a sound basis, since in Ukraine and European countries, the authorities annually (usually in April) prepare and publish detailed reports on the official websites, which contain examples of specific cases that were reviewed in the previous year.

In particular, the paper investigates the report of the Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine for 2018 (Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine..., 2018), and the reports of the relevant bodies of Poland (Competition Committee of Poland, 2018) and Germany (Federal Anti-Cartel Office, 2018) - the countries selected for comparison, as well as relevant recommendations on this issue from the European Commission (Competition: Antitrust procedures..., 2013). This approach greatly facilitates the work of scientists and helps to make specific recommendations for improving

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law enforcement (Antufev et al. 2019a; Antufev et al. 2019b; Polovchenko 2020; Pylypenko 2020a; Pylypenko 2020b; Kucheryavenko and Smychok 2019).

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the specific rules of Ukrainian legislation and European legislation on the protection of economic competition, including the practice of its application. On a case-by-case basis, this paper evaluates the role and importance of antitrust laws and the practical evaluation of the performance of competition authorities. Both qualitative indicators (case-specific materials) and quantitative indicators (general data reported by the antitrust authorities) are taken for evaluation. This paper also describes proposals to amend antitrust legislation in Ukraine proceeding from the analysis results.

LITERATURE REVIEW

At the theoretical level, the issue of protecting economic competition is relevant to all countries of the world. With that, it is worth noting that among scientists there is not even a shared opinion on how to call this sub-branch of law. At present, three names are equally widely used at the level of theory and practice – antimonopoly legislation, competition law, and antitrust legislation.

It should be noted that the results of research in this field, carried out by scientists from different countries, have remarkably comparable results, although there are some national features. Because antitrust (competition) law is an overly broad branch, scientists are paying attention to the various aspects of this complex phenomenon. The number of works in this direction is also increasing from year to year, which testifies to the unfailing relevance of this subject matter (Antufiev et al. 2018; Astapov et al. 2019; Pichkur et al. 2015; Polovchenko 2019a; Polovchenko 2019b; Marushchak 2019).

Gishan Dissanaike points to the need to support a balance upon granting merger acquisitions (Dissanaike et al. 2020; Koban 2019; Politanskyi 2019). Since, on the one hand, regulatory merger control reduces the profitability of corporate acquisitions, while the uncertainty of merger control decisions reduces the threat of merger. However, for the mechanism to work efficiently, active work of state antitrust authorities is required.

Historically, it should be noted that back in 1994 (Brezezinski 1994), researchers addressed the

peculiarities of the antitrust legislation of the Central European countries, which were just beginning to pave the way to the introduction of market mechanisms (including Poland and the Czech Republic). In many respects, the challenges which the Czech Republic and Poland faced at the time are currently relevant to Ukraine as well.

Colomo and Kalintiri (2020) upon examining the European Commission's application of European law in the field of EU antitrust legislation (Articles 101 and 102 of the TFEU), point to a tendency for politically motivated reduction in the number of cases handled by a competition authority.

Dutra and Sabarwal (2020) analyse a slightly different side to competition protection — merger control. Scientists fairly point out that antitrust authorities should block anticompetitive mergers without interfering with competitive ones. With that, however, determining whether a merger can lead to anticompetitive effects should it be approved, requires extensive analysis — theoretical, empirical, and institutional.

Bradford (2019) argues that the world's largest consumer markets – the European Union and the US – have applied different approaches to regulating competition. With that, the EU and the US offer competing models. Researchers say that the European model of regulation, which the EU is actively promoting through preferential trade agreements, currently has several advantages. Among them, an easy-to-adopt administrative template is the leading one.

In concurring with the opinion of the researchers, it is worth pointing out that Ukraine is precisely one of the markets for which there is competition between different models of antitrust legislation. At the same time, given the course of Ukraine for EU accession, the European model is still winning this competition.

Bradford (2018) also argues that enforcement of competition law in Russia and former USSR countries has certain specifics. In general, the researcher also points out that in Ukraine the level of enforcement of competition law at large is unusually high. Bradford's study indicates that in 2010, 621 market dominance investigations were opened in Ukraine, 614 in 2009, and 480 in 2008. The number of cases involving investigations of cartel conspiracies in Ukraine was also considerable — Ukraine started 272 such investigations in 2010, with 34 of them completed.

According to the researcher, this figure is equal with the number of such cases in the United States (Bradford et al. 2018; Onishchenko and Bobrovnyk 2019; Kostenko 2019).

Khokhlov (2014), who conducted similar research on antitrust law, noted that Russian competition law has undergone significant changes, most of which were implemented under EU competition law, but provisions that require further harmonization still remain. These include fields such as state/municipal tender procedures, special antitrust requirements for tenders, or non-discriminatory rules on natural monopolies. Burkart particularly emphasizes the role of legislative protection of investors (Burkart et al. 2014; Zhuravel and Kerikmäe 2019). As the author fairly points out, legal protection of investors increases the external opportunities of bidders.

Drobetz and Momtaz (2019) address the influential role of cross-border acquisitions. Researchers consider this phenomenon to be positive, because cross-border acquisitions lead to improvement of shareholders' rights and expansion of ownership structure in a large sample of intra-European acquisitions.

Alter and Helfer (2017) also address the specific role of an authority such as the Andean Tribunal (which operates only in the field of intellectual property in the South American market). The Andean Pact was founded in 1969 to build a common market in South America. Andean leaders copied the institutional and contractual design of the European Community, and in the 1970s the Member States decided to add a tribunal. Since its first ruling in 1987, it is now the third largest international court in the world, used by governments and individuals to protect their rights and interests in the region. Initiated as a copy of a European institution, the Andean Tribunal is now a fully-fledged regional competition authority and has launched several legal mechanisms of its own.

Among foreign researchers, only Bradford turned to the analysis of the situation in Ukraine (Bradford et al. 2018; Babaytsev and Rabinskiy 2019; Zinchenko 2019; Therefore, for the sake Savchyn 2019). completeness of the analysis, we shall address the works of Ukrainian scientists on this subject matter. With that, it should be noted that, despite the topical nature of this subject matter, currently there is a certain shortage of new scientific developments on this issue in Ukraine.

One of the most relevant works is the work of Huk (2017), which addresses the current problems of regulating abuse of a dominant position in the antitrust laws of the European Community and Ukraine. The paper also investigates mechanisms and subjective composition of state control over economic concentration processes in developed countries of the world.

The paper by Khachatrian and Slobodianyuk (2016) analyses the functional features of the Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine under current conditions and investigates the main tasks of this body. At the legislative level, the main regulations governing the activities of the Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine are the Law of Ukraine "On the Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine" (1993) and the Law of Ukraine Protection against Dishonest Competition" (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine 1996).

The Law of Ukraine "On Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine" (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine 1993) in Article 1 determines that the Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine is a state body with a special status, the purpose of which is to provide national protection of competition in business and in the field of public procurement. In the same law, Article 3 points out which tasks are assigned to the Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine. With that, Article 7 covers the powers conferred on the Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine (44 in total).

The Law of Ukraine "On Protection against Dishonest Competition" (1996) is more focused on regulating the consideration of cases of violation of the legislation on protection of economic competition, which begins with the adoption of the order to open the case and ends with the decision on the case (Kosinova 2019).

That is, in general, the implementation of the powers to protect economic competition in Ukraine is vested in the Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine, which ensures the functioning of a system of legal provisions that establish the basic principles of competition protection and antitrust regulation, i.e. legislation on the protection of economic competition.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The leading theory in the methodology of Ukrainian jurisprudence is normativism. Ukraine, as a postsocialist country, uses an approach to scientific methods based on an orthodox empirical concept.

Especially this scientific tradition is noticeable in the field of social and legal sciences. In Ukraine, the methodology of law is studied mainly at the general theoretical level within the limits of the theory of state and law. Ukraine has a specific approach to this formulation of legal research methods. At the same time, there are very few legal methodology papers in Ukraine (Babaytsev *et al.* 2017a; Babaytsev *et al.* 2017b; Nurmaganbetova *et al.* 2020; Onishchenko and Suniehin 2018; Sabirova *et al.* 2018).

As Semchuk *et al.* (2019) point out, Ukrainian legal science is characterized by the use of references to certain conventional methods without referring to the author or elaborating on the nature of such methods. To achieve the purpose of the study, complex methods were used: empirical and theoretical.

Theoretical methods that embody the conventional Ukrainian approach to methodology are also used in this study. Aristotelian method is used to form new concepts, classify them, identify the types of the phenomena under study, i.e. division into separate types, subtypes; to eliminate inaccuracies and discrepancies, etc. This method involves the use of logical laws and rules (also called methods-techniques or logic techniques): rising from the abstract to the concrete, abstraction, analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction, modelling, etc. In many ways, this method (along with the comparative one) is fundamental in the paper (Babaytsev et al. 2019; Babaytsev et al. 2015; Tugarova 2019; Hladky 2019).

Formal and dogmatic or legal method, based on the use of the rules of formal logic for knowledge of law, is conventionally inherent in legal science, because it arises from the very nature of jurisprudence. Its essence lies in the formulation and elaboration of legal concepts, the construction of legal structures and clarification of the actual content of laws. The dialectical method is used at all stages of scientific research. This method helps to explore all the phenomena in their interrelation, interdependence, and historical development.

The comparative method involves comparing legal concepts, phenomena, and processes in a single order, and proving similarities and considering differences between them. A prerequisite for using this method is the comparability of its objects (belonging to one type, kind, the presence of similar structures, functions, tasks, goals, etc.). Comparisons are used to classify legal phenomena, clarify their historical sequence, genetic relations between them, general and specific

patterns of development, correlation of legal traditions and legislative innovations.

Regarding empirical methods, it should be noted that the sociological (statistical) method was used in the paper. Statistical methods in legal research involve the use of specific methods of statistical science to determine the quantitative characteristics of social phenomena and the processes governed by the rules of law to determine the efficiency of law. Research is conducted to show statistical patterns and relationships inherent in objects that are studied in different branches of law. Legal research uses different statistical methods, such as statistical observation, grouping, calculations of relative and average values, indices (Barabanshchikov et al. 2016; Bayboltaeva et al. 2018; Sassykova et al. 2019; Shtal et al. 2019; Shtal et al. 2019).

Particularly important in this context is the analysis of secondary information. In general, such information has its own sources and features. Secondary information is information that exists and is collected from various sources for other purposes. The secondary data helps the researcher to get a deeper understanding of the situation in the branch. The sources of secondary information are divided into internal and external. A special place among external secondary sources of information is held by statistical yearbooks, reports by antitrust authorities, judgments, and decisions of antitrust authorities. The main advantages of external sources of secondary information are that the information is of high quality and is regularly updated. The disadvantages of external sources of secondary information are conditioned upon the fact that the information is obtained not from the purposes of the given scientific research, but from other purposes. Despite this, although secondary data were used for the analysis (since no special survey was conducted for the paper) in the field of economic competition protection. They very accurately reflect the current state of protection of competition, are grouped on the official reports of the antitrust authorities of Ukraine, Poland, and Germany for 2018. Using the statistical method in conjunction with the logical techniques of open source analysis, in particular the annual reports, identified problems and deficiencies in the activities of the Antitrust Committees.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Despite its wide range of powers, the activities of the Antimonopoly Committee currently have some

drawbacks. At the time of the main research in March 2020, the annual report for 2019 had not yet been approved and published. Therefore, the general annual report for 2018 was used as the basis for the study (as the latest available), including official information on the website of the Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine about making some later decisions (Bieliatynskyi et al. 2018; Sorokin and Novikov 2019; Starikov et al. 2011; Kaplina 2019).

According to the official report of the Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine for 2018, the Antimonopoly Committee bodies terminated 168 violations of the Law Ukraine "On Protection against Dishonest Competition". Of these, 53 violations in the form of unfair competition, for which the Committee decided to impose penalties, and 115 - actions that contained signs of such violations, which were terminated in accordance with the recommendations given by the Committee bodies to economic entities (Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine 2018). According to the report, in 2018, 7,786 complaints were received, of which 1,3444 violations were terminated. With that, the total number of considered statements, complaints, and other appeals on violations of the legislation on protection of economic competition in comparison with the total number of accepted of applications for 2015 is 78% (6,494 accepted; 5,048 reviewed), for 2016 - 71% (6,741 accepted; 4,775 reviewed), and 73% for 2017. The number of suspended offenses in 2015 is 4,523; for 2016 - 3,072; 2,435 cases were dismissed in 2017. As for the number of inspections, it can be noted that in 2015 there were 139, in 2016 - 118, in 2017 - 76. As is clear from the comparison of these data, the overall tendency in the work of the Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine, which appeared in 2015, is still unchanged.

Of course, if we look at such data in isolation, it may give the impression that the Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine is performing extremely poorly. However, this is not entirely true. According to data from the European Competition Network, from 2004 to 2018, the national competition authorities of the EU examined an average of 311 to 165 cases per year in each EU country (Statistics of the European...). With that, the number of cases in different EU countries was also quite uneven: from 3 in Malta to 149 in Italy. Another 105 cases were handled directly by the European Commission (The Bundeskartellamt Annual... 2018).

That is, the above suggests that in Ukraine the number of cases under consideration of the Antimonopoly Committee is equal with that in Central Europe but is larger in general. Therefore, in quantitative terms, the work of the Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine can be considered as satisfactory (Bogaevskaya et al. 2020; Bulychev et al. 2019; Stepanchuk et al. 2017).

Regarding the quality level of decisions of the Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine in comparison with EU countries, the following features are worth noting. EU membership requires the recognition of the authority of certain supranational bodies by all its members. This explains the existence of such a specific legal phenomenon as EU legislation. Protection of economic competition in the EU Member States also has, along with national, specific pan-European regulation (Krayushkina et al. 2019; Kurbanova et al. 2020; Makushkin 2019).

Shifting from the quantitative indicators of the Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine to the qualitative ones, it should be noted that the Report for 2018 (Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine, 2018) contains examples of specific cases considered in 2018, and the official website of the Antimonopoly Committee of regularly publishes decisions Ukraine and recommendations. It is these official data, which are of high quality and accuracy, which are taken as the basis for further analysis. At the same time, it was quite a difficult task to select a few cases from the mass of decisions of the Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine for 2018 that would be of the greatest importance for illustrating current tendencies in law enforcement (Dinzhos et al. 2015; Kostruba 2019a; Kostruba 2019b; Kostruba 2020; Mansurova et al. 2018; Talaspayeva et al. 2017).

One such decision is the Decision of the Provisional Administrative Board of the Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine No. 29-p/τκ dated 21.11.2018, by which the Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine recognized PJSC "Poltavaoblenergo" as such that during the period from 01.01.2017 to 21.11.2018 held a monopoly position in the market of distribution of electric energy by local electrical networks within the territorial boundaries of several districts where the company-operated electric networks are located (within the scope of licensed activity). The actions of PJSC "Poltavaoblenergo", which lied in obstructing electricity suppliers of access to the electricity supply market at an unregulated tariff, were found to be in violation of paragraph 2 of Article 50 and paragraph 7 of part 2 of Article 13 of the Law of Ukraine "On Protection of Economic Competition" in the form of abuse of monopoly position (Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine 2018).

An example of a ban on concerted action is the Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine Decision No. 315-p of 21.06.2018, by which the Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine found actions committed by several oil refining companies to be illegal. They lied in a similar increase in the price of liquified petroleum gas when it was sold at retail in August 2017, although the analysis of the market situation makes it impossible to have objective reasons for such actions.

In the field of intellectual property protection, exemplary is the decision of the Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine No. 546-p dated 11.10.2018, which renders illegal the actions of LLC SVKZ and LLC Strongdrink (city of Dnipro) regarding the use of labels for hard liquor drinks ("Malt") "Black Jack" and "Black Jack" "Silver Whiskey", which are similar to the label for alcoholic beverages "Jack Daniel's", without the permission (consent) of Jack Daniel International Corporation Properties, Inc. (California, USA).

Of interest are also examples of antitrust enforcement in public bidding. The decision of the Lvivske Oblast territorial branch of the Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine dated 05.09.2018 No. 63/20-p/k establishes violation of the legislation on protection of economic competition, provided for in paragraph 4 of Part 2 of Article 6, paragraph 1 of Article 50 of the Law of Ukraine "On Protection of Economic Competition", in the form of anticompetitive concerted actions concerning distortion of the results of bidding during participation in competitive procurement of food products conducted by the department of education (Fialko et al. 1994; Krasilshchikov et al. 2014; Tashpulatov et al. 2018a; Tashpulatov et al. 2018b; Yuilin et al. 2019; Zvorykin et al. 2016).

Worthy of special attention is the Decision of the Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine No. 601-p dated 01.11.2018, which recognized that the State Enterprise "National Information Systems" (hereinafter referred to as SE NAIS) in 2016 and 2017 occupied a monopoly (dominant) position in the national market of services for ensuring access to and use of the Unified and State registers, the holder of which is the Ministry of Justice, the users' right of access to which is defined by legislation. Actions of SE NAIS in 2016 and 2017 to apply measures without objectively justified reasons in equivalent agreements with users of the Enterprise's services for providing access to and use of the Unified and State Registers held by the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine were declared illegal (Formalev et al. 2019a; Formalev et al. 2019b; Kostruba et al. 2020; Zykova et al. 2021).

We shall consider examples of decisions of foreign antitrust authorities. According to the report of the Competition Committee of Poland, in 2018, the provisions of Directive 2019/1 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2018 were implemented to enhance the competences of Member States' competition authorities to be more effective in law enforcement and to ensure the functioning of the internal market. Competition legislation has also been adjusted in accordance with the provisions of Regulation (EU) 2018/302 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 February 2018 and amendments to Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004 and (EU) 2017/2394 and Directive 2009/22/EU. In 2018, the Competition Committee received 539 notices, 54 preliminary and 11 antitrust proceedings were initiated (Annual Report on Competition... 2018). In 2018, a total of 4 fines were imposed with a total value of PLN 1,095,112.94 as a penalty for the practice of restricting competition. The decision No. RKR-3/2018 fined 3 subjects, RPZ-11/2018 – one. The decisions were issued by branches in Krakow and Poznan. In addition, in 2018 the Krakow branch won all competition cases in courts of various instances (Polish Competition Committee 2018).

The RKR-3/2018 case concerned the conclusion of an agreement that limits competition on the Polish market of hosting servers, which consists in agreeing on the conditions of proposals of entrepreneurs submitted in production for the conclusion of a public agreement, the subject of which was the placement of feature servers and servers for entrepreneurial activity (Polish Competition Committee 2018).

Case RPZ-11/2018 concerned the conclusion of an agreement restricting competition in the passenger transportation market, wherein the entrepreneurs agreed that only certain individual entrepreneurs would serve specific lines (Polish Competition Committee 2018).

The committee instituted proceedings against the Polish Post. The Polish office will check whether the company uses its position to remove other entrepreneurs from the market. There are doubts about the terms of the contracts with which Polish Post contractors, which provide universal postal services, operate. Also, production was initiated against 16 entrepreneurs, including operators Calypso, Zborovit, Fitness Platinum, and Fitness Academy due to operations upon registration of membership and discount cards (Polish Competition Committee 2018).

Particularly important is the case against Gazprom and five international organizations responsible for financing the Nord Stream 2 pipeline. Two years ago, the company that was supposed to be involved in the construction of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline did not receive the approval of the Office for this transaction. Unfortunately, as the investigation showed, despite the objections of the antitrust authorities, the entities decided to do so to fund the project. This could be a violation of antitrust legislation (Polish Competition Committee 2018).

The German Federal Anti-Cartel Office, as a result for 2018, notes two new penalties for cartels, three new cartel cases, 433 new private antitrust cases, 8 special letters (Anti-Cartel Office 2018).

Regarding specific cases, a partial confirmation of the decisions of the Düsseldorf Higher Regional Court for the liquefied gas cartel (KRB 51/16) was received. In a number of decisions, the Federal Court has confirmed the allegations that several suppliers of liquefied natural gas have entered into cartel agreements (Anti-Cartel Office 2018).

In October 2018, the decision-making department began administrative proceedings against the largest manufacturers in the furniture production sector. In view of the growing concentration in the furniture production sector and the announcement by Krieger Group of its plan to join the VME Union, the Antitrust Office is examining whether this cooperation will cause competition problems (Anti-Cartel Office 2018).

However, the biggest case of the year in Germany is the case against Amazon. In November 2018, following a large number of complaints from small and medium-sized retailers. the decision-making department launched a malpractice proceeding against Amazon to investigate its conditions and practices regarding sellers in the German market. Amazon is the largest online retailer working in the German market to date. Many retailers and manufacturers are dependent on Amazon. Its dual role as the largest seller and largest marketplace has the potential to discourage other sellers on its platform. The office looked at whether Amazon was abusing its market position to the detriment of sellers (Anti-Cartel Office 2018).

Also, among other interesting cases, in February 2019, several restrictions were imposed on Facebook for the collection and processing of data. The decisionmaking department evaluates Facebook's behaviour as

the so-called exploitative abuse of its position by a dominant company. Primarily, this applies to cases where operational practice also hinders competitors who cannot accumulate such an extensive database (Anticartel Office 2018). The office also took part in many matters in the field of oil refining, store trade, shipbuilding, air transportation, etc.

At the theoretical level, the issue of protecting economic competition is to a certain extent relevant for all countries of the world. At the same time, it is worth noting that among scientists there is not even a consensus on what this sub-branch of law should be called. At present, the three names are equally common in theory and practice - antimonopoly legislation, competition law, and antitrust legislation. It should be noted that the results of studies in this field, conducted by scientists from different countries, have remarkably comparable results, although there are some national features. Since antitrust (competition) law is an overly broad branch, scientists are paying attention to the various aspects of this complex phenomenon. The number of papers in this field published by foreign scientists (Dissanaike, Colomo, Dutra, Bradford, Burkart, Drobetz, Alter, etc.) is also increasing year by year, which testifies to the unfailing relevance of this subject matter. With that, domestic legal researchers are not so active in paying attention to the issues of antitrust law analysis, but there are interesting and contemporary works (Koshoridze et al. 2017; Tashpulatov et al. 2020; Timkina et al. 2019; Tsypko et al. 2019).

With regard to the quality level of the decisions of the Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine, the analysis of the cases suggests that, in general, the Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine makes decisions on protection of competition in almost all sectors of the economy, and such decisions generally are of rather high quality. Among the most illustrative decisions are the cases concerning Poltavaoblenergo on abuse of monopoly position in the market of electricity distribution by local electric networks; on a number of oil refineries accused of raising their liquefied petroleum gas prices at retail in August 2017; the use of liquor labels of hard alcohol beverages ("Malt") "Black Jack" without the permission (consent) of Jack Daniels Properties, Inc.; a number of decisions on public procurement violations; as well as with regard to SE "National Information Systems", which, in 2016 and 2017, occupied a monopoly (dominant) position in the national market of providing services for access and use of the Unified and State registers (Kostruba and

Hyliaka 2020; Kostruba and Vasylyeva 2020; Vapniarchuk *et al.* 2019).

The antitrust authorities of Poland and Germany (countries taken for comparison) during that period actively implemented the EU Competition Law Directives, namely the European Parliament and Council Directive 2019/1 of 11 December 2018, Regulation (EU) 2018/302 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 February 2018, Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004 and (EU) 2017/2394, and Directive 2009/22/EC, etc.

With that, in 2018, the Competition Committee of Poland received 539 notices, 54 preliminary and 11 antitrust proceedings were initiated, a total of 4 fines totalling PLN 1,095,112.94 as penalties for restrictive practices. Case RKR-3/2018 concerned the conclusion of a contract restricting competition in the Polish market for hosting servers; case RPZ-11/2018 concerned an agreement restricting competition in the passenger transportation market. The Committee also instituted proceedings against the Polish Post and proceedings against Gazprom. The Federal Anti-Cartel Office of Germany, as a result of 2018, indicates two new criminal proceedings against the cartel, three new cartel cases, 433 new private antitrust cases, 8 special letters. Among the cases discussed, the most illustrative are the cartel agreement on liquefied gas suppliers, banning the merger of major ticket vendors about the concentration in the furniture sector. Of interest are also the ongoing proceedings on Amazon and Facebook.

CONCLUSIONS

On its path to European integration, Ukraine is constantly improving its antitrust legislation and strengthening its protection of economic competition. Prior to independence and the collapse of communism, Ukraine (along with the Czech Republic, Poland, and several other post-socialist countries) had a highly monopolized economy built on a state plan. Since its establishment, the Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine has had protection of economic competition as one of its main tasks.

The analysis of the quantitative indicators of the Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine's work revealed that in 2018 the Antimonopoly Committee bodies terminated 168 violations of the Law of Ukraine "On Protection against Unfair Competition". Of these, 53 were unfair competition, which the Committee had

decided to impose penalties on, and 115 were actions that contained signs of such violations, which were terminated in accordance with the recommendations given by the Committee to business entities. Overall, this figure is close to previous years.

According to data from the European Competition Network, from 2004 to 2018, national competition authorities of the EU examined an average of 311 to 165 cases per year in each EU country (Statistics of the European...). That is, the above suggests that in Ukraine, the number of cases considered by the Antimonopoly Committee is equal with that of the Central Europe, but larger in general. Therefore, in quantitative terms, the work of the Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine can be considered satisfactory.

The foregoing suggests that the activity of the Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine on quantitative and qualitative indicators is in line with the level of work of the relevant European institutions. Since 2016, the work of the Antimonopoly Committee has been consistently high. In the future, there is likely to be a gradual improvement in the work of the Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine. An additional impetus to this process may be given by a closer European integration process in the field of economic competition protection by extending the EU Directives on this issue to the territory of Ukraine.

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