UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
MINISTRY OF ECONOMY & TOURISM

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Seventh ARAB COMPETITION FORUM (ACF)

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Session 3

Merger control in the digital sector

Digital mergers can reshape competition in ways that are not always captured by conventional indicators such as current revenues, market shares or price effects. Acquisitions may involve emerging competitors, valuable datasets, innovative technologies or services that complement existing platform ecosystems. Their effects may extend beyond the immediate markets concerned and influence future competition, innovation, quality, consumer choice, privacy and access to digital services.

This session will examine how merger control can respond to the distinctive characteristics and rapid evolution of digital markets. It will consider whether existing analytical frameworks and theories of harm adequately capture the potential effects of digital mergers, and how authorities can assess transactions involving uncertain or longer-term competitive effects. Drawing on regional and international experiences, the discussion will explore how merger assessment can remain effective while providing legal certainty and preserving incentives for investment and innovation.

Note: The session will last 90 minutes. Presentations by the panelists will be followed by interventions from member States and an open discussion.

Topics of discussion

- Distinctive characteristics of digital mergers and their implications for competition assessment.
- The adequacy of existing merger-control frameworks in addressing the challenges posed by digital transactions.
- Traditional and emerging theories of harm applicable to digital mergers.
- The role of data, ecosystems, innovation and other non-price factors in merger assessment.
- Challenges in assessing evidence and potential long-term effects on competition in digital mergers.
- Regional and international experiences in adapting merger control to digital markets.

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Session coordinator



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Speakers



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