



Please contact any of the attorneys in Venable's **International Trade and Customs Group** if you have any questions regarding this client alert.

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## Container Liner Shipping Sector "Dawn Raided" in EU

The European Commission, which has responsibility for enforcing the EU's antitrust rules, announced that it has raided the offices of a number of companies active in the container liner shipping sector. The raids took place in several Member States.

Raids of this kind are carried out when the Commission has reason to believe that companies have violated the EU's antitrust rules prohibiting cartels or other restrictive agreements and abuse of a dominant market position. The fact of having carried out raids does not prejudice the outcome of the Commission's investigation and there will now follow an extended period of information gathering, including via requests for information sent to sector participants and possibly further raids on additional companies.

Following the repeal of the maritime conference block exemption in the EU in 2008, the sector looked likely to be a prime target for antitrust investigation in Europe, as was the airline sector following the repeal of the IATA tariff conference exemption in 2007. It remains to be seen whether the EU raids will generate investigations in other jurisdictions, many of which maintain some level of antitrust immunity for maritime conferences.

History tells us that investigations of this kind often lead to further proceedings and investigations from other jurisdictions. Companies that are active in the liner sector or related sectors, whether in the EU or elsewhere, may wish to take the opportunity to promptly undertake a review of their businesses to determine whether this investigation gives rise to new business risks or otherwise alters their risk profile.

If you are interested in finding out more about this investigation, or you receive a request for information from the European Commission, or you would like to understand the compliance risks facing your business, please [contact us](#).

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