

Commission appoints Chief Competition Economist

The European Commission today appointed Professor Lars-Hendrik Röller as the Chief Competition Economist in its Directorate-General for Competition. "The appointment of a Chief Economist forms an integral part of my commitment to strengthen further the economic underpinnings of our competition analysis", said Competition Commissioner Mario Monti. "I want to thank publicly the many world-class economists who expressed an interest in the post, making this a difficult choice. I am convinced that Professor Röller's outstanding academic record and his experience in the field will provide invaluable support to the Commission in the preparation of its decisions in complex cases in the merger area but also in anti-trust and state aid investigations".

Mr Röller is currently Professor of Economics at Humboldt University in Berlin. He is also Director of the Institute for "Competitiveness and Industrial Change" at the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung. Since 1996, he has been programme director of the industrial organisation group of the London-based Centre for Economic Policy Research (CEPR). After obtaining a B.S. in Computer Science at Texas A&M University, he pursued his studies at the University of Pennsylvania (M.S. in Computer and Information Science, M.A. in Economics, Ph.D. in Economics). He has subsequently held posts at a number of academic institutions, including the French-based European Institute of Business Management INSEAD, Stanford University, New York University and the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. He has advised a number of public bodies as well as private firms in competition policy cases. He has published extensively on competition issues and sits on the editing boards of a number of journals, including the International Journal of Industrial Economics (editor since 1999).

Professor Röller is expected to take up the post on 1st September. The Chief Economist will report directly to the Director General of Competition and have a dedicated staff of approximately 10 specialised economists.

The appointment will be for a period of 3 years, non-renewable, as decided by the Commission in December 2002 as part of the Commission's merger control review package. His role, however, extends beyond mergers to include anti-trust and state aid control. He will have three main tasks:

- Guidance on economics and econometrics in the application of EU competition rules. This may include contributing to the development of general policy instruments;
- General guidance in individual competition cases from their early stages; and

- Detailed guidance in the most important competition cases involving complex economic issues, in particular those requiring sophisticated quantitative analysis.

The post was published at the beginning of the year and the deadline for applications was the 18th of March. In total, 36 candidates applied. Today's appointment follows a series of interviews in the course of which the Commission was assisted by external advisers of international reputation in the field.