



Antitrust: Commission carries out unannounced inspections in the wood pulp sector

Brussels, 12 October 2021

On 12 October 2021, the European Commission is conducting unannounced inspections in locations in several Member States at the premises of companies active in the wood pulp sector.

The Commission has concerns that the inspected companies may have violated EU antitrust rules that prohibit cartels and restrictive business practices ([Article 101](#) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union). The Commission officials were accompanied by their counterparts from the relevant national competition authorities.

Wood pulp is a dry fibrous material made from wood, which is used to manufacture different paper products (tissue, writing paper, paperboard, etc.).

Unannounced inspections are a preliminary step in an investigation into suspected anticompetitive practices. The fact that the Commission carries out such inspections does not mean that the companies are guilty of anti-competitive behaviour nor does it prejudice the outcome of the investigation itself.

The Commission fully respects the rights of defence in its antitrust proceedings, in particular the right of companies to be heard.

The inspections have been conducted in compliance with all coronavirus health and safety protocols to ensure the security of those involved.

There is no legal deadline to complete inquiries into anticompetitive conduct. Their duration depends on a number of factors, including the complexity of each case, the extent to which the undertakings concerned co-operate with the Commission and the scope of the exercise of the rights of defence.

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Press contacts:

[Arianna PODESTA](#) (+32 2 298 70 24)

[Maria TSONI](#) (+32 2 299 05 26)

General public inquiries: [Europe Direct](#) by phone [00 800 67 89 10 11](#) or by [email](#)