

January 2026

## Competitive Edge

Bird & Bird

### Competitive Edge

Keeping you up to date on Competition and EU law developments in Europe and beyond

#### In Focus



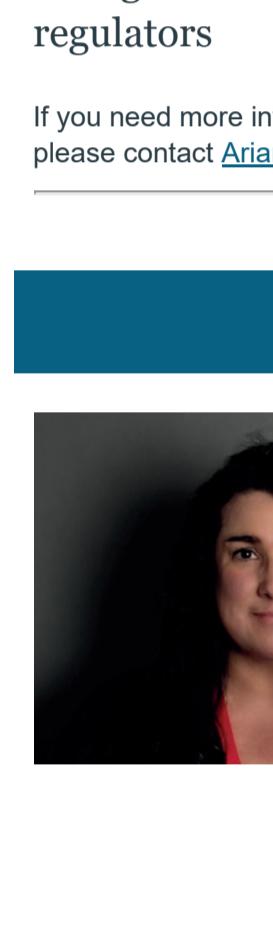
#### Cross-border perspectives on Antitrust and Sport

Competition and sports law experts **Dr Saskia King** and **Richard Bush**, along with Senior Associate, **Emma Birmingham** and Associate, **Aditi Aggarwal**, have published this article in **Concurrences Review N° 1-2026** providing insights on the competition law and sports governance landscape post Superleague.

The article challenges the position that sporting rules not satisfying Superleague's procedural set of criteria should automatically constitute by-object restrictions of competition law under Article 101 TFEU. By examining the Superleague judgment and recent Advocate General opinions in the cases RRC Sports, ROGON and Tondela, the authors demonstrate why the by-object test - and in particular, contextual analysis - remains fundamental.

*This article is normally behind a paywall, but will be open to all readers until 21 February 2026.*

[Read the full story](#)



#### The Fine Line: where pay transparency regulation and competition law risk intersect

As the EU Pay Transparency Directive's 7 June 2026 implementation deadline approaches, multinationals face a new compliance challenge: meeting transparency obligations without crossing into anti-competitive information exchange.

Recent enforcement action by the UK CMA and European Commission signals that labour markets remain a priority focus for competition authorities. The CMA's first labour market infringement decision in March 2025 resulted in a £4.24 million fine for wage collusion, whilst the European Commission imposed €329 million in fines for no-poach agreements in June 2025.

Our competition experts **Ariane Le Strat**, **Aditi Aggarwal**, and employment experts **Emily Clark** and **Olivia Baxendale** examine this intersection, explaining when pay transparency crosses into unlawful collusion and providing practical risk mitigation strategies for HR, reward and recruitment teams navigating these competing obligations.

[Read the full story](#)

#### Updates from our jurisdictions

##### EU

Post-infringement redemption - How to avoid exclusion from EU tenders and funding after a competition law infringement

[Read the full story](#)

If you need more information or further guidance in this area, please contact **Baptist Vleeshouwers** and **Claire De Neve**.

##### Australia

Australia's new merger regime: It's not getting any easier!

[Read the full story](#)

If you need more information or further guidance in this area, please contact **Thomas Jones**, **Matthew Bovaird** or **Dylan McGirr**.

##### Belgium

Belgian Competition Authority clears early adoption of compostable coffee pod requirement

[Read the full story](#)

If you need more information or further guidance in this area, please contact **Baptist Vleeshouwers**, **Sander Wagemakers**, and **Claire De Neve**.

##### Denmark

The Garden of Eden: The Danish Competition Council takes a bite out of Apple

[Read the full story](#)

To each his own... or not - Danish Competition Appeals Board overturns long-running Botex market allocation ruling

[Read the full story](#)

If you need more information or further guidance in this area, please contact **Morten Nissen**, **Alexander Brøchner**, **Pauline Holm Jørgensen** or **Selma Hjorth Aslan**.

##### France

Too small to notify, too dangerous to ignore? The French Competition Authority's scrutiny of below-threshold acquisitions

[Read the full story](#)

If you need more information or further guidance in this area, please contact **Elsa Mandel Benichou** or **Thomas Oster**.

##### Netherlands

Dutch vets under the ACM microscope: consolidation, emergency care and a push to ban commercial incentives

[Read the full story](#)

If you need more information or further guidance in this area, please contact **Pauline Kuipers** or **Sander Wagemakers**.

##### Italy

The Italian Competition Authority has sanctioned Ryanair for abuse of dominant position

[Read the full story](#)

If you need more information or further guidance in this area, please contact **Federico Marini Balestra**, **Lucia Antonazzi** and **Jacopo Orsi**.

##### Spain

A late bloomer tale - CNMC ends 2025 with the first vertical case of the year

[Read the full story](#)

If you need more information or further guidance in this area, please contact **Candela Sotés** or **Pablo Rodriguez**.

##### UK

AI regulation in the UK: The role of the regulators

[Read the full story](#)

If you need more information or further guidance on the competition law side of this topic, please contact **Ariane Le Strat** and **Aditi Aggarwal**.

#### Events and webinars



European League of Sports Antitrust webinar hosted by Kings Chambers

**Sports Antitrust: The Year in Review**

28 January | 14:00 - 17:00 GMT | Online

This free webinar hosted by Kings Chambers will provide an overview of 2025's most significant competition law developments in sport. Alongside leading academics and practitioners, our London-based sports competition partner **Dr Saskia King** will address competition enforcement in sports labour markets, exploring the impact of recent rulings on issues such as salary caps, player mobility restrictions and no-poach agreements. The session brings together high-calibre speakers to analyse landmark cases, enforcement trends and emerging challenges facing sports bodies, leagues, athletes and regulatory authorities.

[Find out more and register here >>](#)

If you need more information or further guidance in this area, please contact **Baptist Vleeshouwers**, **Sander Wagemakers**, and **Claire De Neve**.

#### Bird & Bird in person event



**Life Sciences Academy 2026**

5 February | 8:30 - 14:00 GMT | Bird & Bird

Join us at our Bird & Bird London office on Thursday 5 February for our latest Life Sciences Academy, where shaping the life sciences sector. As a leading life sciences hub, the forum will bring together leading professionals looking to stay ahead of this year's trends and developments in the industry. This is a must-attend event for anyone involved in the industry.

Our multidisciplinary team - Spanning, Property, Regulatory, Competition, Com, focused, antitrust, Data Protection - will deliver a programme of focused sessions on key topics impacting the industry. Trends and challenges will be covered, including the evolution of the pharmaceuticals industry, the impact of new regulations on the industry, and the challenges of navigating the complex landscape of life sciences regulation.

Guest speaker **Jeremy Thorpe**, Managing Director of Pliantis Pharma UK & Ireland, will share his insights on the pharmaceuticals industry, including the challenges of navigating the industry and the opportunities for growth.

[Find out more and register here >>](#)

If you need more information or further guidance in this area, please contact **Morten Nissen**, **Alexander Brøchner**, **Pauline Holm Jørgensen** or **Selma Hjorth Aslan**.

#### Informa conference



**Consumer Protection Forum**

12 February | London, UK

Informa's annual Consumer Protection Forum will examine the UK's competition and consumer protection landscape, focusing on the latest trends and challenges in the industry.

Guest speakers will include **Dr Saskia King** and **Emma Birmingham**, who will discuss the latest developments in consumer protection and competition law.

[Find out more and register here >>](#)

If you need more information or further guidance in this area, please contact **Baptist Vleeshouwers**, **Sander Wagemakers**, and **Claire De Neve**.

#### Conference



**Competition Next Gen Summit 2026**

3 - 4 March | London, UK

At this event, hosted by Taming the Beast, leading competition and consumer protection experts from around the world will share their insights on the latest trends and challenges in the industry.

Guest speakers will include **Dr Saskia King** and **Emma Birmingham**, who will discuss the latest developments in consumer protection and competition law.

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#### Conference



**European law at a Crossroads**

12 March | 14:00 - 18:00 CET | Amsterdam

The Dutch Journal of European Law (NEDERLANDS Tijdschrift voor Europees Recht (NEDERLAND)) is marking its 20th anniversary with a symposium on the future of European law.

Guest speakers will include **Dr Saskia King** and **Emma Birmingham**, who will discuss the latest developments in consumer protection and competition law.

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#### Conference



**CompLaw: Nordic**

17 - 18 March | Stockholm, Sweden

**Morten Nissen** will be speaking at this year's CompLaw conference.

Guest speakers will include **Dr Saskia King** and **Emma Birmingham**, who will discuss the latest developments in consumer protection and competition law.

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