

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **14 April 2022**

## **Joint Statement on Maintaining Competition Policy in Post-Pandemic Economic Recovery**

The ASEAN Heads of Competition Agencies (AHCA) issued a Joint Statement on Maintaining Competition Policy in Post-Pandemic Economic Recovery to support ASEAN's post-pandemic recovery efforts as guided by the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF). The Joint Statement underlined the importance of competition policy in contributing to the objectives stated in the ACRF and acknowledged that closer governmental engagement is critical to facilitate economic recovery.

The Joint Statement highlighted the AHCA's agreement to adopt the following actions to maintain and improve competition:

- a. Support economic recovery by focusing enforcement efforts on strategic markets and industries that are important for economic recovery, and streamlining processes to make them business-friendly;
- b. Strengthen advocacy efforts to policymakers from an early stage to ensure that competition issues form part of their considerations in developing new policies and regulations;
- c. Provide the government and other relevant legislative bodies with advice and recommendations on competition law and policy;
- d. Ensure that anti-competitive activities do not take place under the guise of economic recovery, and cooperate with other competition authorities as appropriate to curtail such anti-competitive activities;
- e. Enhance our national and regional capacity to assess and handle competition issues relating to digital markets; and
- f. Strengthen our outreach to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

The Joint Statement is aimed at strengthening competition in ASEAN and encourage closer governmental engagement for a more resilient ASEAN. The Joint Statement is a follow-on from the Study on "The Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic and Economic Recovery to Competition Law and Policy" which was led and drafted by Indonesia,



Chairman of the AHCA and the AEGC in 2021. The Joint Statement is downloadable here.

Furthermore, the AHCA reaffirmed the Joint Statement issued by the ASEAN Experts Group on Competition in Response to the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Pandemic in June 2020.

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