

The findings of the inventory of state aids, outlined in the First Survey on State Aids released in 1989, and a follow-up survey released in 1990, have led to a major shift in the direction of EC competition policy in this area. In particular, they have resulted in greater emphasis being placed on the control of ongoing aid programmes. In addition, the findings of the inventory have provided the impetus for the adoption, during the run-up to 1992, of a number of other measures to expand and strengthen the competition policy restraints on state aid.

3. Competition Advocacy and Europe 1992

The prominence given to Community competition policy through its inclusion in Articles 3 and 85 to 94 of the EEC Treaty also has a strong relationship to the Europe 1992 initiative. As stated by one expert, these Articles may be viewed as expressing "a norm that markets must be open, that anti-competitive regulations must be narrow, that they ought to be phased out over time, and that they should be subject to constant monitoring."⁶ According to this norm, anti-competitive interventions into EC markets by the EC Commission or the governments of Member States should be kept as narrow as possible to allow the open and efficient functioning of the common market.

The importance attached to competition policy within the EEC Treaty has traditionally provided EC competition advocates with a strong basis of support from which to promote pro-competitive regulatory and other reform. The initiative to complete the internal market by 1992 has further buttressed this position. The Europe 1992 goal of creating open and competitive markets has provided competition advocates in the Community with an even stronger basis of support from which to promote deregulatory and other pro-competitive reforms in highly restricted areas of the European economy, such as airlines, telecommunications, financial services and public procurement.