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## Brussels Snapshot: Latham & Watkins

*Tuesday, March 21, 2006* --- One of the most recent additions to the competition law practices in Brussels, Latham & Watkins has drawn on the diverse experience of its attorneys to quickly build a sought-after team.

Four partners opened Latham's Brussels office in February 2002, moving to the firm from rival Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr.

The firm began growing by leaps and bounds, making a strategic decision to build a global practice. Despite beginning with a handful of lawyers, Latham gradually added offices, expanding across Europe and into Asia and reaching the nearly 500 attorneys it counts today in its European practice.

Latham's Brussels competition group is unique in the breadth of experience of its attorneys and partners. Two partners in the office had been clerks at the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg, bringing a courtroom perspective to a practice area often dominated not by litigators, but by advisers.

But while the firm may be known for its international practice, each of Latham's offices has a significant domestic focus, said Javier Ruiz Calzado, a partner in the firm's Brussels office.

"We have our own presence and our own clients," he said. "Our client base is a mix of those referred from our U.S. offices and clients we generate from the Brussels office or from our other European offices."

Latham's proliferation across Europe has jibed well with recent trends in competition law. As the European Commission seeks to send more competition cases to national courts, the firm finds itself up to the challenge of litigating in many different jurisdictions.

"We are unlike many other firms in that we are a truly transnational group," Calzado said. "We are very well-placed, and in Europe this has been particularly important since 2004 and the tendency toward decentralization. In the Brussels office, we have attorneys that can practice in Spain, Italy, France and Germany, among other countries."

The Brussels office quickly became an essential part of Latham's global network after the firm realized the importance of having a strong antitrust practice.

Many of the firm's corporate clients involved in litigation count on Latham for advice on or representation in potential antitrust issues that may arise. This

lends the firm a “one-stop shop” appeal, Calzado said.

And the firm is unlikely to see a shortage of work in the near future, due to a general increase in cartel enforcement, a jump in merger filings and a heightened regulatory focus on the energy sector.

Clients that look to Latham for help in these matters will surely be drawn by the firm’s record in antitrust litigation.

Latham recently worked on an abuse of dominant position case involving one of the largest soda bottlers in Europe. After a five year investigation, the EC agreed to drop the allegations levied against the company, marking a significant victory for both the bottler and the firm.

The firm also currently represents clients from a wide variety of industries, including the banking sector, the air transport sector and the technology industry.

Latham attorneys have also recently been involved in several high-profile cartel cases, including those in the steel, chemical and paper product sectors.

In the cartel investigation involving pre-insulated pipe companies, the Brussels office of Latham won the only fine reduction granted in the case.

The firm’s practice is not limited to mergers and cartels. Latham also has thriving state aid and trade law practices, and often works on framing and pursuing litigation under EC competition and trade law.

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