

Change afoot at DG Comp?

9 February 2005

A number of DG Comp officials will switch management jobs in the early part of 2005, sources say. There is even speculation regarding the plans of the director general.

According to sources in Brussels DG Comp has a director level position and four heads-of-unit jobs to fill. The directorate is B (energy, water, food and pharmaceuticals). A further director position will become vacant when **Sven Norberg**, of directorate R (resources), retires.

The available head of unit posts are as follows:

- Head of unit COMP E2 (construction, paper, glass, mechanical and other industries). Vacant since **Nicola Anecchino** moved to DG Justice

- Head of unit I 1 (state aid policy coordination). Here, one of Philip Lowe's aides, **Nicola Pesaresi**, is seen as a potential candidate for the job. He already advises Lowe on state aid

- Head of unit D 2 (transport). Philip Lowe's other aide, **Linsey McCallum**, is mooted by some as a possibility for this position

- Head of unit B 3 (mergers, energy, water, food and pharmaceuticals). **Paul Malric-Smith** has moved to E 3, another merger unit (industry).

Comments **Tom Brookes**, account director at GPlus Europe:

"With these staff changes, the rise of the new generation of senior managers at DG Comp continues." Nearly half of the heads of unit at DG Comp are in their 40s.

2005 could see two other noteworthy developments. First, the bush telegraph continues to hum with speculation that Philip Lowe the director general of competition will leave DG Comp in June.

Lowe, 57, has told friends his stay at DG Comp depends on whether he is in the running to be secretary general - highest civil service job at the Commission. If he stays at DG Comp, he has three further years before the 'mobility rule' applies. The fact that his assistants may be considering moves seems in part to have inspired the talk of an early departure.

Second, DG Comp may soon announce a dedicated cartel directorate. A pair of such units were dissolved last year, at the same time as the dissolution of the merger task force. But whereas the merger task force became mini MTFs, dotted around DG Comp, the cartel units ceased to exist.

Comments **Michael Tscherrny**, a former Commission spokesperson for competition policy and now a partner with GPlus Europe: "Breaking up the cartel busters' expertise is now seen as a mistake that **Neelie Kroes** may want to rectify."

Having a focused group might allow DG Comp to complete cartel investigations faster, it is said.