

Sustainability - Changing Paradigms in Innovation and Competition?

Conference of the Max Planck Institute for Innovation and Competition
in collaboration with the MPI Alumni Association

15th July 2022, 14:00–17:15 (CET)

Max Planck Institute, Munich (Room E10) and Online

Conference Programme

14:00 Welcome address

Prof. Dietmar Harhoff, Ph.D., Max Planck Institute for Innovation and Competition

14:15 – 15:30 Panel I – Incentives to foster sustainable innovation

'Sustainability' can be interpreted broadly, yet it often refers to measures mitigating climate change. Sustainable innovation in this regard is arguably threatened by a number of factors. Generally, research and development (R&D), the first steps in the innovation process, tend to be underprovided. Due to their public good characteristics, positive externalities arise and institutions cannot internalize these. Additionally, sustainable innovation faces specific challenges. The development of radically new technologies is inherently more risky, thus more costly. Yet, consumer preferences, often centred on price, rarely reward sustainable innovation. Taken together, comparably lower returns to sustainable innovation make it less attractive. Governments employ a variety of national, regional or even global measures to foster sustainable innovation. These can be grouped into push and pull incentives, either promoting desired technologies directly at the stage of research ('push') or through the market's rewards for certain technologies ('pull'). Furthermore, from a practical perspective, climate change mitigation has not only a pressing timeframe, but also a transnational aspect to it. Considering this particular and complex setting, Panel I discusses the incentives to foster sustainable innovation.

Panelists:

- Dr. **Natascha Eckert**, University Relations at Siemens AG
- Prof. Dr. **Klaus Fichter**, University of Oldenburg and Founder of the Borderstep Institute for Innovation and Sustainability
- Prof. Dr. **Till Requate**, University of Kiel and Commission of Experts for Research and Innovation (EFI)
- **Daria Saharova**, Founder of World Fund (VC for climate technology)

15:30 – 16:00 Coffee break

16:00 – 17:15 Panel II – Competition Law and sustainable innovation

Over the last two years, a lively policy and academic debate has taken place on the role that competition law may and should play in mitigating climate change and how it could complement other policy measures towards a green transition. Much of this debate has centered on the deterrent effect that competition rules may have on environmentally-positive industry collaboration and the need to improve legal certainty in this regard. Legislative amendments and guidelines for the competition law assessment of sustainability agreements have been issued or are in preparation, both at national and European level. At the same time, strong competition law enforcement is considered to be key in promoting sustainable market outcomes. This view aligns with economic evidence showing that firms' exposure to sustainable consumers' attitudes fosters green innovation, all the more as competition is strong. While there is consensus on the need to combat harmful greenwashing vigorously, exploring alternative paths to actively foster sustainability via competition law enforcement is still necessary. The idea behind Panel II is to move this general debate further and gain more insights on how competition law can best contribute to the attainment of sustainability goals.

Panelists:

- Prof. Dr. **Andreas Heinemann**, University of Zurich, President of the Swiss Competition Commission
- Dr. **Torben Stühmeier**, Senior Analyst, German Monopolies Commission
- Dr. **Cristina Volpin**, Competition Policy Expert, OECD
- Dr. **Petra Linsmeier**, Partner, Gleiss Lutz