HELLENIC COMPETITION COMMISSION Athens, 13 April 2021

Press Release

Subject: **Presentation of the HCC Data Analytics and Economic Intelligence Platform**

The Hellenic Competition Commission ("HCC") presented on Tuesday, April 6th, 2021, its own data analysis platform, the "HCC Data Analytics and Economic Intelligence Platform". This is an innovative technological tool, which has already been used in the context of the HCC's on-going investigations on healthcare materials as well as on various foodstuffs markets. The creation of the platform was the result of a close collaboration between the HCC staff, a group of internationally renowned experts coordinated by the Professor of the Department of Informatics at the Athens University of Economics and Business ("AUEB"), Mr. Vassilios Vassalos, and the company Warply.

In his speech, the President of the HCC Prof. **Ioannis Lianos**, after thanking the colleagues who participated and contributed to this project as well as the overall work of the HCC, he mentioned, *inter alia* that:
"*Algorithms offer additional opportunities to enforcers to more accurately detect collusion and other anti-competitive practices upon the basis of Big Data. They complement existing digital technologies used to enforce competition law, such as online whistleblowing tools. As part of its digital transformation program, and specifically with a view to addressing the challenges of constantly monitoring the market during the Covid-19 pandemic, the HCC has designed and developed the HCC Data Analytics and Economic Intelligence platform, an innovative tool which can collect and process economic data (eg prices) of thousands of products in various markets in Greece in real time. The new project is a key point in the HCC's digital transformation process. The main functions of the new HCC Data Analytics and Economic Intelligence platform are the collection and analysis of market data in real time, the use of optimized market monitoring dashboards that directly issue analytics and reports, while at the same time the platform incorporates a screening mechanism in order to ensure that the prioritisation of the HCC's cases is done efficiently and based on their real impact on the economy.*
The HCC now forms part of a group of Competition Authorities from all over the world that systematically use Big Data Analytics in their daily work. It is worth noting in this respect that when the new HCC Board was appointed, the HCC did not have any software which could enable faster and more efficient data analysis, save for limited technical means for its inspections, especially dawn raids, as there hadn't been any investments in IT infrastructure in recent years, even though resources were available, nor any planning to acquire the necessary hardware and software for inspections and staff training in new technologies. The present investment on the part of the HCC constitutes one more step forward in our broader planning, which includes a series of projects based on the use of AI technologies, both in the context of our investigative work as well as in the context of the HCC's interaction with the public, as evidenced by the newly introduced digital services of the HCC. Our aim is to push the HCC forward

so that it can lead the way in this field, as it did in the case of the HCC Data Analytics and Economic Intelligence platform, but also to increase the revenue of the Authority, through funding from research and training services to other Authorities. Suffice it to say that the platform has already contributed EUR 65,000 to the budget of the HCC, a few months after its activation, not only fully covering but also exceeding the costs for its creation".

Subsequently, Mr. **Vassilis Vassalos**, Professor of Informatics of the AUEB, stated that the aim of the project was to create an infrastructure based on state-of-the-art technologies that will help the HCC monitor various sectors of the economy, by analysing data sources such as okaa.gr (a database of the Central Markets and Fisheries Organization), e-katanalotis.gr and fuelprices.gr, which essentially draw data on supermarkets, fuel, fruits and vegetables and fish. He also mentioned that an effort is being made to add more databases in the future.

Mr **Admir Demirai**, a researcher at the Department of Informatics of AUEB, continued with an analysis of the technical details of the platform.

For his part, Mr. **Ioannis Doxaras**, head of the company that participated in the creation of the IT infrastructure (Warply), praised the scientific competence of all participants in the project and analysed the procedure followed for the launch of this project, ie the creation of an ecosystem dedicated in the monitoring of consumer markets. He further elaborated on the technical aspects of the platform and its connection to real-time databases, such as e-katanalotis.

Mrs. **Eugenia Ioannidou**, Head of the HCC's Forensic Investigation/ Detection Unit presented the mission of the newly established Unit, which she heads. She stated that "*our main concern is organising and managing effectively the vast amount of data collected by the HCC's sectoral Directorates during their investigations. The main purpose of the Unit is the development and management of software programs that allow the combined digital review and evaluation of the relevant data/ files in order to be able to use the more quickly and efficiently. In addition to ensuring the interconnection with databases that 'feed' data to the HCC Data Analytics and Economic Intelligence platform, the Unit aspires to develop its own databases. By using the IT programs available to the HCC, it is now possible to send questionnaires (RFIs) to thousands of businesses simultaneously. The information is then collected in a codified way so that its further analysis is more straightforward. The resulting information databases are imported digitally into the HCC's IT infrastructure and from there are accessible to the relevant Sectoral directorate*".

You can watch the video of the presentation with detailed time code here.