



ECA's Legal Action Against Price Fixing in the Transport Sector

On 5 October 2026, the Egyptian Competition Authority (ECA) announced it had referred 11 members of the Cooperative Association for Transport and Container Handling in the ports of Suez and the Red Sea to the Public Prosecution. The members are accused of agreeing to raise and fix freight rates.

The ECA's action is part of its ongoing efforts to combat monopolistic practices that harm competition, particularly in strategic sectors such as transport. The ECA gathered evidence revealing that the members had agreed to raise and fix freight rates for private land transport services for goods to and from the Suez and Red Sea ports. Price-fixing agreements between competitors are classified as horizontal agreements and are strictly prohibited under the Egyptian Competition Law due to their anticompetitive effects.

Meeting minutes as evidence

The ECA found that the agreements were reached during meetings held at the Association's headquarters, as evidenced by the corresponding meeting minutes. This case illustrates how meeting records between competitors can serve as evidence of anticompetitive conduct. The ECA's Guidelines on compliance with the Egyptian Competition Law explicitly advise undertakings attending meetings with competitors in trade associations to keep clear meeting minutes. This helps verify whether a practice might violate a law.

The Guidelines also recommend recording objections in the meeting minutes. Maintaining accurate meeting minutes matters for two reasons. First, it helps identify potentially anticompetitive conduct. Second, it documents

the position of compliant competitors who object. Consequently, if discussions raise potential competition concerns, participants must ensure their objections are clearly recorded, refrain from participating in unlawful coordination and seek appropriate legal advice.

A Recurring pattern of price-fixing

The ECA has highlighted that this case is not an isolated practice, but forms part of a recurring pattern of coordination regarding freight rates. The ECA's Board of Directors previously issued a decision finding that several employees in the transport sector at Ain Sokhna Port violated competition law by agreeing to raise and fix freight rates. As the ECA confirmed, the same parties' repeated similar conduct despite this earlier decision points to continued disregard for competition law. The ECA has stated that this requires a firm response.

This raises the question of recidivism and its potential consequences. For horizontal agreements, the fine ranges from 2% to 12% of the gross revenues of the product subject to violation. In cases of recidivism, the minimum and maximum fine limits are doubled. Whether the doubled fine limits apply in this case remains to be determined.

Implications for related markets

The effects of price fixing within the transport sector may extend well beyond transport service providers. Higher freight rates can increase costs for businesses that rely on the movement of goods, affecting supply chains and the wider economy.

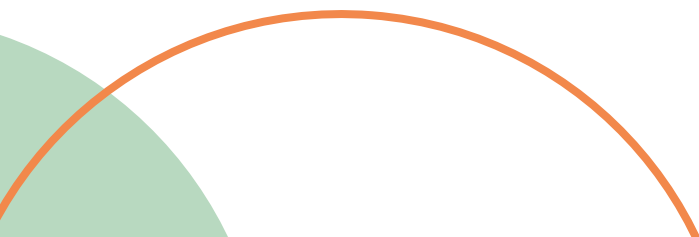
Businesses that discover potentially anticompetitive conduct should assess their position promptly and seek legal advice. The ECA has also encouraged those involved in such practices to report them and consider the exemption mechanism under the Competition Law, subject to the applicable statutory

conditions. For an overview of the Egyptian leniency program, see our [client brief of 10 February 2023](#).

Key takeaway

The ECA's action is a reminder that businesses should ensure their representatives attending trade association meetings understand the limits imposed by competition law.

Discussions between competitors concerning prices or other competitively sensitive information can expose participants to significant legal risks. Accordingly, businesses that identify potentially unlawful coordination should promptly seek legal advice.

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