

For Immediate Release: July 27, 2016

World Law Group Releases Handy Multinational Reference to Unfair Trade Practices

Washington, D.C./If your company needs to know which major countries have consumer protection laws vs. others that don't, or what particular competitive strategies, marketing programs and advertising would be deemed as "unfair competition" in a specific foreign market, there is now a great new reference to help.

World Law Group, one of the globe's premier networks of independent law firms, has just published a unique multinational guide on the topic, which covers 37 major jurisdictions. A PDF of *Unfair Trade Practices: A Global Comparative Law Survey* can be downloaded for free at www.theworldlawgroup.com.

The WLG's Unfair Trade Practices guide provides a brief summary of laws governing unfair competition/unfair trade practices in each country, and answers some of the most commonly asked questions. As explained in the guide's introduction:

"For global companies in particular, knowing the market rules of the countries they are doing business in is crucial to conduct their business in compliance with those laws."

But, as the editors note, this can be a difficult task, considering that the only international law with regard to unfair competition law (Article 10*bis* of the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property) merely requires all countries party to that agreement to grant protection against "unfair competition". However, the definition of unfair competition given in the Convention is very broad – essentially, it includes any act of competition contrary to honest practices in industrial or commercial matters. Moreover, only three kinds of unfair trade practices are specifically defined.

"Considering these facts, it is no surprise that no consensus exists on what actions should be regarded as unfair, how fairness in the market should be enforced, and who should be protected by the laws against unfair competition: Only consumers? Only competitors? Or consumers, competitors and the general public?" explain editors Julia Wulf and Alan Sutin. (Julia Wulf is a partner with WLG member firm Taylor Wessing in Germany and chair of the World Law Group's global Intellectual Property & Information Technology Group. Alan Sutin is a partner with Greenberg Traurig, P.A. in Miami, Florida and is co-chair of the WLG IP&IT Group.

The first edition of the Unfair Trade Practices guide provides an overview and comparison of the relevant law in 37 countries, as analysed by experts in World Law Group member firms. It addresses, among other things, questions as to which law deals with unfair competitive behaviour, which practices are deemed unfair in the individual countries covered, and how fairness is enforced in each of these markets.

Established in 1988, World Law Group is one of the globe's oldest and largest networks of leading independent law firms, and is rated as one of a select few "Elite" networks by Chambers and Partners. Our 54 member firms encompass approximately 18,000 legal professionals working from 350 offices in major business centres in 75 countries worldwide.

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