

The submitted work concerns itself with the topic of protection of consumers and their welfare as an objective of the EU competition policy, as well as with the regulation of EU competition law and the way in which this objective has changed over time, both in fact and in legal perception.

The first, theoretical, part of this thesis explains concepts essential for this analysis – the concept of "consumer" and its specifics in the context of the EU competition law, the definition of "consumer welfare" and the general relationship between consumer protection law and competition law.

The second part deals with the historical development of consumer protection as an objective of EU competition policy. Particular attention is paid to the progress made in understanding the importance of this objective over time. An emphasis is placed on it in the political declarations of the Commission's representatives and subsequently, whether and how these political declarations and efforts were reflected in the actually adopted documents of competition law. This section therefore analyses the processes that formed the ideological basis for consumer protection under competition law and how they were reflected in formal sources of law. Although, at the doctrinal and political level, the parameter of consumer protection and welfare has been relatively clearly the primary objective of legislation for years, current competition documents in many cases still only mention "consumers" in preambles or general provisions.

The final part of the work focuses on problems within the researched area that are still unresolved or have only emerged relatively recently. Firstly, a satisfactory regulation of collective redress actions for damages caused by antitrust infringements is still missing. Secondly, there are major challenges associated with the development of new technologies and digital markets and with the fact that competition instruments and mechanisms are not fully applicable to these new types of markets. For the sake of complexity, this work also briefly deals with the response of competition law to the coronavirus pandemic, again, with regard to consumer protection.