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Will France Continue Aggressive Bribery Enforcement Efforts in the Wake of a U.S. “Pause”?

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Over the last decade, France has reinvented itself as a leader in the global fight against corruption, with novel legal frameworks and an active enforcement culture. In doing so, it has responded to and been a vocal critic of what it perceived as the extraterritorial overreach of U.S. enforcement agencies, citing as examples several large French companies that have faced steep fines for corruption- or sanctions-related misconduct.

In a recent executive order (FCPA EO), it appears that the current U.S. president has come around tot he idea that U.S. enforcement has overreached, and called for a “pause” in FCPA cases while enforcement priorities are reassessed.

Ironically, it is precisely the U.S. pressure that catalyzed France’s reforms and resulted in a more robust French enforcement environment that is poised to fill any gaps left by the pause in FCPA enforcement. In this article, we discuss how France has an opportunity to further distinguish itself as an influential partner in the global fight against corruption. With the United States appearing to step back, France may be well-positioned to step forward.

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