



Department of Justice

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FIRST EVER EXTRADITION ON ANTITRUST CHARGE

Former Marine Hose Executive Extradited from Germany to Face Charges of Participating in Worldwide Bid-Rigging Conspiracy

WASHINGTON – Romano Piscioti, an Italian national, was extradited from Germany on a charge of participating in a conspiracy to suppress and eliminate competition by rigging bids, fixing prices and allocating market shares for sales of marine hose sold in the United States and elsewhere, the Department of Justice announced today. This marks the first successfully litigated extradition on an antitrust charge.

Piscioti, a former executive with Parker ITR Srl, a marine hose manufacturer headquartered in Veniano, Italy, was arrested in Germany on June 17, 2013. He arrived in the Southern District of Florida, in Miami, yesterday and is scheduled to make his initial appearance today in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida in Ft. Lauderdale, at 11:00 a.m. EDT.

“This first of its kind extradition on an antitrust charge allows the department to bring an alleged price fixer to the United States to face charges of participating in a worldwide conspiracy,” said Assistant Attorney General Bill Baer in charge of the Department of Justice’s Antitrust Division. “This marks a significant step forward in our ongoing efforts to work with our international antitrust colleagues to ensure that those who seek to subvert U.S. law are brought to justice.”

Marine hose is a flexible rubber hose used to transfer oil between tankers and storage facilities. During the conspiracy, the cartel affected prices for hundreds of millions of dollars in sales of marine hose and related products sold worldwide.

According to a one-count felony indictment filed under seal on Aug. 26, 2010, and ordered unsealed on Aug. 5, 2013, in U.S. District Court in the Southern District of Florida, Piscioti carried out the conspiracy by agreeing during meetings, conversations and communications to allocate shares of the marine hose market among the conspirators; use a price list for marine hose in order to implement the conspiracy; and not compete for customers with other marine hose sellers either by not submitting prices or bids or by submitting intentionally high prices or bids, all in accordance with the agreements reached among the conspiring companies. As part of the conspiracy, Piscioti and his conspirators provided information received from customers in the United States and elsewhere about upcoming marine hose jobs to a co-conspirator who served as the coordinator of the conspiracy. That coordinator acted as a clearinghouse for bidding information that was shared among the conspirators, and was paid by the manufacturers for coordinating the conspiracy. The department said the conspiracy began at least as early as 1999 and continued until at least May 2007. Piscioti was charged with joining and participating in the conspiracy from at least as early as 1999 until at least November 2006.

Pisciotti is charged with violating the Sherman Act, which carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison and a \$1 million criminal fine for individuals. The maximum fine may be increased to twice the gain derived from the crime or twice the loss suffered by the victims of the crime, if either of those amounts is greater than the statutory maximum fine.

As a result of the department's ongoing marine hose investigation, five companies, including Parker ITR; Bridgestone Corp. of Japan; Manuli SPa of Italy's Florida subsidiary; Trelleborg of France; and Dunlop Marine and Oil Ltd, of the United Kingdom, and nine individuals have pleaded guilty.

The investigation is being conducted by the Antitrust Division's Washington Criminal I Section, the Defense Criminal Investigative Service (DCIS) of the Department of Defense's Office of Inspector General, the U.S. Navy Criminal Investigative Service and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The U.S. Marshals Service and other law enforcement agencies from multiple foreign jurisdictions are also investigating or assisting in the ongoing matter. The Criminal Division's Office of International Affairs provided assistance.

Anyone with information concerning bid rigging or other anticompetitive conduct in the marine products industry is urged to call the Antitrust Division's Washington Criminal I Section at 202-307-6694.

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