

Copper Tubes

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Related Practice Areas: **Competition Disputes**

In 2004, the European Commission (“EC”) fined group of companies a total of €222.3 million for participating in the European water, heating and gas copper tubes cartel between 1988 and 2001.

The Cartel

Among those companies named in the EC Decision as cartelists are Boliden, Austria Buntmetall AG, Halcor S.A., HME Nederland BV, IMI Group, KME Group, Mueller Industries, Outokumpu Oyj and Wieland Werke AG. The cartelists systematically agreed regular price increases and quantity restrictions whilst also regularly exchanging sensitive market information.

The cartelists sought to cartelise copper plumbing tubes; these are usually manufactured and subsequently distributed as “hard”, “medium”, “half-hard” or “soft” tubes. Additionally, copper plumbing tubes can take the form of either an insulated or plain copper tube.

Our Actions

Hausfeld brought proceedings on behalf of a group of over 20 leading construction companies against a number of cartelists in the UK Competition Appeal Tribunal (“CAT”) in May 2012. By agreements of the parties the claim was transferred to the High Court.

If your organisation purchased copper plumbing tubes between 1988 and 2001, then it can recover damages from the members of the cartel.

Supporting Documents

1. European Commission Press Release, 3 September 2004