

Automotive Parts

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Related Practice Areas: **Antitrust / Competition**

Over the last several years, competition authorities from 15 separate jurisdictions including Europe, the US, and Asia have undertaken over 30 investigations into anticompetitive conduct in the automotive parts sector resulting in more than 90 fines and/or guilty pleas. In the United States, 48 companies and 65 executives have been charged and have agreed to pay more than \$2.8 billion in fines. More than 40 separate auto parts cases have been consolidated into the *In re Automotive Parts Antitrust Litigation* (MDL 2311) in the Eastern District of Michigan. The U.S. Department of Justice has described its investigation into price-fixing in the automotive products industry as *“the largest criminal investigation the Antitrust Division has ever pursued, both in terms of its scope and the potential volume of commerce affected by the alleged illegal conduct.”*

The auto parts cartel engaged in bid-rigging and price fixing resulting in significant overcharges on the products at issue. The targets of this cartel suffered significant losses and may seek compensation to recoup their losses and secure shareholder value. Hausfeld’s U.S. and European offices work together with individual large automotive manufacturers and other corporations that directly purchased the products at issue, advising on litigation and global settlement negotiations. For example, Hausfeld has represented PSA in its bearings claim and BMW in its car glass claim before the Competition Appeal Tribunal in London.

Parts currently under investigation or that have been the subject of a regulatory decision include: wire harnesses, bearings, spark plugs, clutch facings, climate control systems, wind shield wipers, seatbelts, airbags, steering wheels, bumpers, lighting, hazard switches, access mechanisms, clutches, electrical boxes, switches, steering angle sensors, anti-vibration rubber parts, electronic control units, electric powered steering assemblies, heater control panels, instrument panel clusters, speed sensor wire assemblies, parking heaters, ignition coils, compressors, condensers, starters, alternators, radiators, automatic transmission fluid warmers, high-intensity discharge lamps and ballasts, electronic throttle bodies, variable valve timing devices, automotive tooling, catalytic converters, substrates, monoliths, spark plugs, oxygen sensors, shock absorbers, hoses, air fuel ratio sensors, body sealing products, steering columns, fuel injection systems, electrolytic capacitors, steel abrasives, exhaust systems, braking systems, heat shields, electrical fans, car glass, and polyurethane foam.

Hausfeld also represents automotive manufacturers in their global damages claims arising from the Maritime Car Carriers, or "RoRo," cartel.

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