

Umicore disputes the decision of the French Competition Authority and will appeal

Umicore has taken note of the decision of the French Competition Authority regarding the company's sales of zinc cladding materials and rainwater systems and of the fine imposed, which amounts to EUR 69,243,000 . Umicore will appeal this decision in court.

The French Competition Authority claims that Umicore Building Products France had imposed an exclusive purchase obligation on some of its French distributors between 1999 and 2007 and in doing so had abused an alleged position of market dominance. Umicore categorically denies having imposed or having sought to impose any such exclusive purchase obligations and has provided numerous elements that support its position. A close examination of the facts of the case shows among other things that the distributors named in the statement of objections had a broad and varied range of supply sources to tap into, a significant portion of which was from competitors of Umicore Building Products France.

Moreover, the elements cited by the Authority to establish that Umicore Building Products France held a dominant position in no way reflect the realities of the cladding materials market. In this market, zinc faces a constant battle against a broad range of substitutable products. The position of the Authority is all the more unfounded as it is in contradiction with that of the European Commission and the German Competition Authority which, on repeated occasions in previous decisions, ruled that zinc products are just a sub-segment of the cladding materials market and should not be considered in isolation. According to these previous decisions, Umicore Building Products France does not have a dominant position in any way.

“Umicore CEO Marc Grynberg commented: “Faced with this unfounded decision, we are determined to fight to protect our brand and continue to provide our customers with quality products and services.”

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Umicore profile

Umicore is a global materials technology and recycling group. It focuses on application areas where its expertise in materials science, chemistry and metallurgy makes a real difference. Its activities are organized in three business groups: Catalysis, Energy & Surface Technologies and Recycling. Each business group is divided into market-focused business units offering materials and solutions that are at the cutting edge of new technological developments and essential to everyday life.

Umicore generates the majority of its revenues and dedicates most of its R&D efforts to clean technologies, such as emission control catalysts, materials for rechargeable batteries and recycling. Umicore's overriding goal of sustainable value creation is based on an ambition to develop, produce and recycle materials in a way that fulfils its mission: materials for a better life.

The Umicore Group has industrial operations on all continents and serves a global customer base; it generated a turnover of € 10.4 billion (€ 2.6 billion excluding metal) in 2015 and currently employs 10,400 people.