



Department of Justice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MONDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2002
WWW.USDOJ.GOV

AT
(202) 616-2777
TDD (202) 514-1888

JUSTICE DEPARTMENT WILL NOT CHALLENGE PROPOSED ROBOTIC WELDING STANDARD OF THE AMERICAN WELDING SOCIETY

WASHINGTON, D.C.— The Department of Justice indicated that it has no present intention to challenge a proposal by the American Welding Society (“the Society”) to establish a standard for assuring the interoperability of the various devices that make up a robotic welding cell. The utilization of any standard adopted by the Society will be voluntary. Purchasers and manufacturers will remain free to purchase or produce robotic welding cells that do not satisfy the Society’s standard.

The Society has approximately 50,000 individual and 300 corporate members. The individual members are employed in a wide range of industries; the corporate members are large manufacturers of welding equipment and supplies, as well as end users of welding-related equipment.

A robotic welding cell is made up of several pieces of equipment or devices that work together to produce a weld on an automated basis. In order for the cell to weld, the devices in the cell must communicate with each other. The Society picked one of two competing products for its standard designed to ensure interoperability of the various devices that make up a robotic welding cell.

In a business review letter to the Society’s counsel, Charles A. James, Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Antitrust Division said:

“The Department’s present disinclination to challenge the Society’s proposed standard is based on several factors. We are not aware of any evidence that would lead us to conclude that the proposed standard is the product of any anticompetitive intent on the part of the Society or its members. The Society is made up of producers and consumers of robotic welding systems, and there is little reason to believe that the latter would knowingly deprive themselves of reasonable competitive options. Moreover, this would not appear to be a situation where the Society, without knowledge, has allowed its procedures to be abused by a member seeking an unfair competitive advantage.”

Under the Department’s Business Review Procedure, an organization may submit a proposed action to the Antitrust Division and receive a statement as to whether the Division will challenge the action under the antitrust laws.

A file containing the business review request and the Department’s response may be examined in the Antitrust Documents Group of the Antitrust Division, Suite 215, Liberty Place, 325 7th Street, N.W., Department of Justice, Washington, D.C. 20004. After a 30-day period, the documents supporting the business review will be added to the file.

###