

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)	
)	Criminal No. 10-60232- COHN/SELTZER
v.)	
)	Filed:
ROMANO PISCIOTTI,)	
)	Violation: 15 U.S.C. § 1
Defendant.)	
_____)	

PLEA AGREEMENT

The United States of America and Romano Piscioti (“defendant”) hereby enter into the following Plea Agreement pursuant to Rule 11(c)(1)(C) of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure (“Fed. R. Crim. P.”):

RIGHTS OF DEFENDANT

1. The defendant understands his rights:
 - (a) to be represented by an attorney;
 - (b) to plead not guilty to any criminal charge brought against him;
 - (c) to have a trial by jury, at which he would be presumed not guilty of the charge and the United States would have to prove every essential element of the charged offense beyond a reasonable doubt for him to be found guilty;
 - (d) to confront and cross-examine witnesses against him and to subpoena witnesses in his defense at trial;
 - (e) not to be compelled to incriminate himself;
 - (f) to appeal his conviction, if he is found guilty; and
 - (g) to appeal the imposition of sentence against him.

**AGREEMENT TO PLEAD GUILTY
AND WAIVE CERTAIN RIGHTS**

2. The defendant knowingly and voluntarily waives the rights set out in Paragraph 1(b) - (g) above. The defendant is aware that 18 U.S.C. § 3742 and 28 U.S.C. § 1291 afford the defendant the right to appeal the sentence imposed in this case. Acknowledging this, in exchange for the undertakings made by the United States in this Plea Agreement, the defendant hereby waives all rights conferred by Sections 3742 and 1291 to appeal any sentence imposed, including any restitution order, or to appeal the manner in which the sentence was imposed, unless the sentence exceeds the maximum permitted by statute or is the result of an upward departure and/or an upward variance from the advisory Guidelines range that the Court establishes at sentencing. The defendant further understands that nothing in this Plea Agreement shall effect the United States' right and/or duty to appeal as set forth in 18 U.S.C. § 3742(b) - (c) 28 U.S.C. § 1291. However, if the United States appeals the defendant's sentence pursuant to Sections 3742(b) - (c) and 1291, the defendant shall be released from the above waiver of appellate rights. By signing this Plea Agreement, the defendant acknowledges that the defendant has discussed the appeal waiver set forth in this Plea Agreement with his attorney. Nothing in this paragraph, however, shall act as a bar to the defendant perfecting any legal remedies he may otherwise have on appeal or collateral attack respecting claims of ineffective assistance of counsel or prosecutorial misconduct. The defendant agrees that there is currently no known evidence of ineffective assistance of counsel or prosecutorial misconduct. Consistent with Fed. R. Crim. P. 11(b)(1)(O), the defendant recognizes that if he is not a citizen of the United States pleading guilty may have consequences with respect to his immigration status, including removal from the United States, denial of citizenship, and denial of admission to the United States in the future. Under federal law, a broad range of crimes are removable offenses, including the offense

to which the defendant is pleading guilty. Removal and other immigration consequences are the subject of a separate proceeding, however, and the defendant understands that no one, including his attorney or the district court, can predict to a certainty the effect of his conviction on his immigration status. The defendant nevertheless affirms that he wants to plead guilty regardless of any immigration consequences that his plea may entail, even if the consequence is his automatic removal from the United States. The defendant will plead guilty to an Indictment returned by a federal grand jury in the Southern District of Florida on August 26, 2010. The Indictment charges the defendant with participating in a conspiracy to suppress and eliminate competition by rigging bids, fixing prices, and allocating market shares for sales of marine hose in the United States and elsewhere from at least as early as 1999 and continuing until at least November 2006 in violation of the Sherman Antitrust Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1.

3. The defendant, pursuant to the terms of this Plea Agreement, will plead guilty to Count One of the Indictment and will make a factual admission of guilt to the Court in accordance with Fed. R. Crim. P. 11, as set for Paragraph 4 below.

FACTUAL BASIS FOR OFFENSE CHARGED

4. Had this case gone to trial, the United States would have presented evidence sufficient to prove the following facts:

(a) For purposes of this Plea Agreement, the “relevant period” is that period beginning at least as early as 1999 and continuing until at least November 2006. During the relevant period, the defendant was the oil and gas business unit manager of Parker ITR S.r.l. (“Parker”), an entity organized and existing under the laws of Italy and with its principal place of business in Veniano, Italy. During the relevant period, Parker was a producer of marine hose and was engaged in the sale of marine hose in the United States

and elsewhere. Marine hose is a flexible rubber hose used to transfer oil between tankers and storage facilities and/or buoys. During the relevant period, the volume of United States commerce attributable to the defendant is greater than \$10 million but less than \$40 million.

(b) During the relevant period, the defendant participated in a conspiracy with other persons and entities engaged in the manufacture and sale of marine hose, the primary purpose of which was 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. In furtherance of the conspiracy, the defendant engaged in discussions and attended meetings with executives of other major marine hose firms. One of those meetings took place in 2001 in Key Largo, Florida, within the Southern District of Florida. During this meeting, the defendant and his co-conspirators, including Uwe Bangert, on behalf of Dunlop Oil and Marine Ltd., had group and one-on-one discussions, pursuant to and in furtherance of the conspiracy.

(c) During these meetings and discussions, the defendant and co-conspirators agreed to rig bids, fix prices, and allocate market shares for the sale of marine hose in the United States and elsewhere. Each of the conspiring manufacturers jointly funded a co-conspirator who acted as a coordinator for the cartel and provided the coordinator with information about upcoming marine hose jobs. The coordinator then designated, based on rules agreed to by the co-conspirators and preferences expressed by the co-conspirators, which of the conspiring manufacturers would win the job, referring to the winning conspirator as the "champion." After the champion had been designated, the coordinator provided the other conspirators with instructions regarding how much to bid on the job for the purpose of ensuring that the designated champion would win the job. During the relevant period, the defendant recruited at least two individuals from other marine hose firms to participate in the conspiracy and directed others at Parker to

participate in the conspiracy. The defendant was an organizer or leader in the conspiracy, which involved at least five participants.

(d) During the relevant period, marine hose sold by one or more of the conspirator firms, and equipment and supplies necessary to the production and distribution of marine hose, as well as payments for marine hose, traveled in interstate commerce. The business activities of Parker and co-conspirators in connection with the production and sale of marine hose that were the subject of this conspiracy were within the flow of, and substantially affected, interstate and foreign trade and commerce.

(e) Acts in furtherance of this conspiracy were carried out within the Southern District of Florida. The conspiratorial meetings and discussions described above took place in the United States and elsewhere, and at least one of these meetings which was attended by the defendant occurred in this District.

ELEMENTS OF THE OFFENSE

5. The elements of the charged offense are that:

- (a) the conspiracy described in the Indictment existed at or about the time alleged;
- (b) the defendant knowingly became a member of the conspiracy; and
- (c) the conspiracy described in the Indictment either substantially affected interstate commerce in goods or services or occurred within the flow of interstate commerce in goods and services.

POSSIBLE MAXIMUM SENTENCE

6. The defendant understands that the statutory maximum penalty which may be imposed against him upon conviction for a violation of Section One of the Sherman Antitrust Act is:

- (a) a term of imprisonment for ten (10) years (15 U.S.C. § 1);

(b) a fine in an amount equal to the greatest of (1) \$1 million, (2) twice the gross pecuniary gain the conspirators derived from the crime, or (3) twice the gross pecuniary loss caused to the victims of the crime by the conspirators (15 U.S.C. § 1; 18 U.S.C. § 3571(b) and (d)); and

(c) a term of supervised release of three (3) years following any term of imprisonment. If the defendant violates any condition of supervised release, the defendant could be required to serve up to two (2) years in prison (18 U.S.C. § 3559(a)(3); 18 U.S.C. § 3583(b)(2) and (e)(3); and United States Sentencing Guidelines (“U.S.S.G.,” “Sentencing Guidelines,” or “Guidelines”) §5D1.2(a)(2)).

7. In addition, the defendant understands that:

(a) pursuant to U.S.S.G. §5E1.1 or 18 U.S.C. § 3663(a)(3) or 3583(d), the Court may order him to pay restitution to the victims of the offense; and

(b) pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 3013(a)(2)(A), the Court is required to order the defendant to pay a \$100.00 special assessment upon conviction for the charged crime.

SENTENCING GUIDELINES

8. The defendant understands that the Sentencing Guidelines are advisory, not mandatory, but that the Court must consider, in determining and imposing sentence, the Guidelines Manual in effect on the date of sentencing unless that Manual provides for greater punishment than the Manual in effect on the last date that the offense of conviction was committed, in which case the Court must consider the Guidelines Manual in effect on the last date that the offense of conviction was committed. The parties agree there is no *ex post facto* issue under the November 1, 2013 Guidelines Manual. The Court must also consider the other factors set forth in 18 U.S.C. § 3553(a) in determining and imposing sentence. The defendant understands that the Guidelines determinations will be made by the Court by a preponderance of the evidence standard. The defendant understands that although the Court is not ultimately bound to impose a sentence within the applicable Guidelines range, its sentence must be

reasonable based upon consideration of all relevant sentencing factors set forth in 18 U.S.C. § 3553(a). Pursuant to U.S.S.G. § 1B1.8, the United States agrees that self-incriminating information that the defendant provides to the United States pursuant to this Plea Agreement will not be used to increase the volume of affected commerce attributable to the defendant or in determining the defendant's applicable Guidelines range, except to the extent provided in U.S.S.G. § 1B1.8(b). Pursuant to U.S.S.G. § 6B1.4, the United States and the defendant enter into the following stipulations:

(a) The base offense level for the offense to which the defendant is pleading guilty, as established by U.S.S.G. § 2R1.1(a), is 12.

(b) The offense to which the defendant is pleading guilty involved participation in an agreement to submit non-competitive bids, within the meaning of U.S.S.G. § 2R1.1(b)(1), which increases the offense level by 1.

(c) The volume of commerce attributable to the defendant within the meaning of U.S.S.G. § 2R1.1(b)(2) is more than \$10,000,000, but less than \$40,000,000, which increases the offense level by 4.

(d) Based on the defendant's role in the offense, a 4-level increase in the offense level is appropriate pursuant to U.S.S.G. § 3B1.1(b).

(e) For purposes of U.S.S.G. § 3E1.1, a 3-level reduction of the offense level for defendant's acceptance of responsibility is appropriate. However, should the United States obtain or receive additional evidence or information prior to sentencing that, in its sole discretion, it determines to be credible and materially in conflict with this stipulation, then the United States shall no longer be bound by this stipulation.

(f) Based on the foregoing, defendant's adjusted offense level for the offense to which he is pleading guilty is 18. The Guidelines sentencing range for offense level 18 is 27 to 33 months imprisonment. The defendant's appropriate Guidelines fine range within the meaning of § 2R1.1(c)(1) is between \$132,000 and \$660,000.

SENTENCING AGREEMENT

9. Pursuant to Fed. R. Crim. P. 11(c)(1)(C) and subject to the full, truthful, and continuing cooperation of the defendant, as defined in Paragraph 12 of this Plea Agreement, the United States and the defendant agree that the appropriate disposition of this case is, and agree to recommend jointly that the Court impose, a sentence within the applicable Guidelines range requiring the defendant to pay to the United States a criminal fine of \$50,000 payable in full before the thirtieth (30th) day after the date of judgment; a period of imprisonment of 24 months; credit for the 9 months and 16 days defendant was held in custody of the German government pending his extradition; no period of supervised release; and no order of restitution (“the recommended sentence”). The defendant agrees that he will not request that he be allowed to serve any part of his sentence in home detention, intermittent confinement, or community confinement. The United States will not object to the defendant’s request that the Court make a recommendation to the Bureau of Prisons that the Bureau of Prisons designate that the defendant be assigned to a Federal Minimum Security Camp (if possible at FCI Cumberland) to serve his sentence. The parties agree that there exists no aggravating or mitigating circumstance of a kind, or to a degree, not adequately taken into consideration by the U.S. Sentencing Commission in formulating the Sentencing Guidelines justifying a departure pursuant to U.S.S.G. § 5K2.0. The parties agree not to seek at the sentencing hearing any sentence outside of the Guidelines range nor any Guidelines adjustment for any reason that is not set forth in this Plea Agreement. The parties further agree that the recommended sentence set forth in this Plea Agreement is reasonable. The defendant understands that the Court will order him to pay a \$100 special assessment pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 3013(a)(2)(A) in addition to any fine imposed.

10. The United States and the defendant agree that the applicable Guidelines imprisonment ranges exceed the term of imprisonment contained in the recommended sentence set out in Paragraph 9 above. Subject to the full, truthful, and continuing cooperation of the defendant, as defined in Paragraph 12 of this Plea Agreement, and prior to sentencing in this case, the United States agrees that it will make a motion, pursuant to U.S.S.G. § 5K1.1, for a downward departure from the Guidelines imprisonment range in this case and will request that the Court impose the fine and term of imprisonment contained in the recommended sentence set out in Paragraph 9 of this Plea Agreement because of the defendant's substantial assistance in the government's investigation and prosecution of violations of federal criminal law. Subject to the full, truthful, and continuing cooperation of the defendant, as defined in Paragraph 13 of this Plea Agreement, and prior to sentencing in this case, the United States will fully advise the Court and the Probation Office of the fact, manner, and extent of the defendant's cooperation and his commitment to prospective cooperation with the United States' investigation and prosecutions, all material facts relating to the defendant's involvement in the charged offense, and all other relevant conduct.

11. The United States and the defendant understand that the Court retains complete discretion to accept or reject the recommended sentence provided for in Paragraph 9 of this Plea Agreement.

(a) If the Court does not accept the recommended sentence, the United States and the defendant agree that this Plea Agreement, except for Paragraph 11(b) below, will be rendered void. Neither party may withdraw from this Plea Agreement, however, based on the type or location of the prison facility to which the defendant is assigned to serve his sentence.

(b) If the Court does not accept the recommended sentence, the defendant will be free to withdraw his guilty plea (Fed. R. Crim. P. 11(c)(5) and (d)). If the defendant withdraws his plea of guilty, this Plea Agreement, the guilty plea, and any statement made in the course of any proceedings under Fed. R. Crim. P. 11 regarding the guilty plea or this Plea Agreement or made in the course of plea discussions with an attorney for the government will not be admissible against the defendant in any criminal or civil proceeding, except as otherwise provided in Fed. R. Evid. 410. In addition, the defendant agrees that, if he withdraws his guilty plea pursuant to this subparagraph of this Plea Agreement, the statute of limitations period for any Relevant Offense, as defined in Paragraph 14 below, will be tolled for the period between the date of signature of this Plea Agreement and the date the defendant withdrew his guilty plea or for a period of sixty (60) days after the date of signature of this Plea Agreement, whichever period is greater.

DEFENDANT'S COOPERATION

12. The defendant will cooperate fully and truthfully with the United States in the prosecution of this case, the current federal investigation of violations of federal antitrust and related criminal laws involving the manufacture or sale of marine hose, any federal investigation resulting therefrom, and any litigation or other proceedings arising or resulting from any such investigation to which the United States is a party (collectively "Federal Proceeding"). Federal Proceeding includes, but is not limited to, an investigation, prosecution, litigation, or other proceeding regarding obstruction of, the making of a false statement or declaration in, the commission of perjury or subornation of perjury in, the commission of contempt in, or conspiracy to commit such offenses in, a Federal Proceeding. The full, truthful, and continuing cooperation of the defendant will include, but not be limited to:

(a) producing in the United States and at other mutually agreed-upon locations all documents, including claimed personal documents, and other materials,

wherever located, not protected under the attorney-client privilege or the work-product doctrine, in the possession, custody, or control of the defendant, that are requested by attorneys and agents of the United States in connection with any Federal Proceeding;

(b) making himself available for interviews in the United States and at other mutually agreed-upon locations, not at the expense of the United States, upon the request of attorneys and agents of the United States in connection with any Federal Proceeding;

(c) responding fully and truthfully to all inquiries of the United States in connection with any Federal Proceeding, without falsely implicating any person or intentionally withholding any information, subject to the penalties of making a false statement or declaration (18 U.S.C. §§ 1001, 1623), obstruction of justice (18 U.S.C. § 1503, *et seq.*), or conspiracy to commit such offenses;

(d) otherwise voluntarily providing the United States with any material or information not requested in (a) - (c) of this paragraph and not protected under the attorney-client privilege or work-product doctrine that he may have that is related to any Federal Proceeding; and

(e) when called upon to do so by the United States in connection with any Federal Proceeding, testifying in grand jury, trial, and other judicial proceedings in the United States fully, truthfully, and under oath, subject to the penalties of perjury (18 U.S.C. § 1621), making a false statement or declaration in grand jury or court proceedings (18 U.S.C. § 1623), contempt (18 U.S.C. §§ 401 - 402), and obstruction of justice (18 U.S.C. § 1503, *et seq.*).

GOVERNMENT'S AGREEMENT

13. Subject to the full, truthful, and continuing cooperation of the defendant, as defined in Paragraph 12 of this Plea Agreement, and upon the Court's acceptance of the guilty plea called for by this Plea Agreement and the imposition of the recommended sentence, the United States agrees that it will not bring further criminal charges against the defendant for any

act or offense committed before the date of signature of this Plea Agreement that was undertaken in furtherance of an antitrust conspiracy involving the manufacture or sale of marine hose. The nonprosecution terms of this paragraph do not apply to (a) any acts of perjury or subornation of perjury (18 U.S.C. §§ 1621-22), making a false statement or declaration (18 U.S.C. §§ 1001, 1623), obstruction of justice (18 U.S.C. § 1503, *et seq.*), contempt (18 U.S.C. §§ 401-402), or conspiracy to commit such offenses; (b) civil matters of any kind; (c) any violation of the federal tax or securities laws or conspiracy to commit such offenses; or (d) any crime of violence.

14. The defendant understands that, upon sentencing, his conviction may qualify for reporting by the Antitrust Division to the Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance pursuant to 10 U.S.C. § 2408 for inclusion in the Defense Procurement Fraud Debarment Clearinghouse database and the System for Award Management. The defendant understands that 10 U.S.C. § 2408 provides for a mandatory term of debarment of at least five years, which term may only be waived if the Secretary of Defense determines a waiver is in the interests of national security. The defendant understands that he may be subject to additional suspension or debarment actions by state or federal agencies other than the Antitrust Division, based upon the conviction resulting from this Plea Agreement and upon grounds other than 10 U.S.C. § 2408, and that this Plea Agreement in no way controls what additional action, if any, other agencies may take. However, the Antitrust Division agrees that, if requested, it will advise the appropriate officials of any governmental agency considering such additional action of the fact, manner, and extent of the cooperation of the defendant as a matter for that agency to consider before determining what action, if any, to take. The defendant nevertheless affirms that he wants to plead guilty regardless of the suspension or debarment consequences of his plea.

15. If the defendant meets all of the terms and conditions set forth in this Plea Agreement, the Antitrust Division agrees that it will advise the Office of Enforcement Operations ("OEO") in the Criminal Division of the Department of Justice that it has no objection to the defendant's application to transfer to a prison facility in Italy to serve his

sentence pursuant to the international prisoner transfer program. The defendant acknowledges and understands, however, that, if he is eligible and applies for transfer, the transfer decision rests in the sole discretion of OEO and that the position of the Antitrust Division is neither binding nor determinative of the positions of other federal agencies or on the final transfer decision of OEO. The defendant further understands that in addition to OEO, federal law and the underlying transfer treaties require that the foreign government must also approve the transfer.

REPRESENTATION BY COUNSEL

16. The defendant has reviewed all legal and factual aspects of this case with his attorney and is fully satisfied with his attorney's legal representation. The defendant has thoroughly reviewed this Plea Agreement with his attorney and has received satisfactory explanations from his attorney concerning each paragraph of this Plea Agreement and alternatives available to the defendant other than entering into this Plea Agreement. After conferring with his attorney and considering all available alternatives, the defendant has made a knowing and voluntary decision to enter into this Plea Agreement.

VOLUNTARY PLEA

17. The defendant's decision to enter into this Plea Agreement and to tender a plea of guilty is freely and voluntarily made and is not the result of force, threats, assurances, promises, or representations other than the representations contained in this Plea Agreement. The United States has made no promises or representations to the defendant as to whether the Court will accept or reject the recommendations contained within this Plea Agreement.

VIOLATION OF PLEA AGREEMENT

18. The defendant agrees that, should the United States determine in good faith, during the period that any Federal Proceeding is pending, that the defendant has failed to provide full, truthful, and continuing cooperation, as defined in Paragraph 12 of this Plea Agreement, or has otherwise violated any provision of this Plea Agreement, the United States will notify counsel for the defendant in writing by personal or overnight delivery, email, or facsimile transmission and may also notify counsel by telephone of its intention to void any of its obligations under this Plea Agreement (except its obligations under this paragraph), and the defendant will be subject to prosecution for any federal crime of which the United States has knowledge including, but not limited to, the substantive offenses relating to the investigation resulting in this Plea Agreement. The defendant agrees that, in the event that the United States is released from its obligations under this Plea Agreement and brings criminal charges against the defendant for any Relevant Offense, the statute of limitations period for such offense will be tolled for the period between the date of signature of this Plea Agreement and six (6) months after the date the United States gave notice of its intent to void its obligations under this Plea Agreement.

19. The defendant understands and agrees that in any further prosecution of him resulting from the release of the United States from its obligations under this Plea Agreement because of the defendant's violation of this Plea Agreement, any documents, statements, information, testimony, or evidence provided by him to attorneys or agents of the United States, federal grand juries, or courts, and any leads derived therefrom, may be used against him. In addition, the defendant unconditionally waives his right to challenge the use of such evidence in any such further prosecution, notwithstanding the protections of Fed. R. Evid. 410.

20. The defendant agrees to and adopts as his own the factual statement contained in Paragraph 4 above. In the event that the defendant breaches this Plea Agreement, the defendant

agrees that this Plea Agreement, including the factual statement contained in Paragraph 4 above, provides a sufficient basis for any possible future extradition request that may be made for his return to the United States to face charges either in the Indictment referenced in Paragraph 2 of this Plea Agreement or in any related indictment.

ENTIRETY OF AGREEMENT

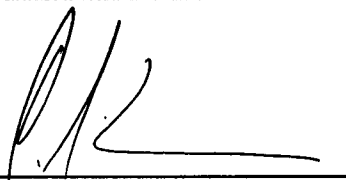
21. This Plea Agreement constitutes the entire agreement between the United States and the defendant concerning the disposition of the criminal charge in this case. This Plea Agreement cannot be modified except in writing, signed by the United States and the defendant.

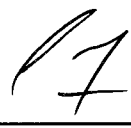
22. The undersigned attorneys for the United States have been authorized by the Attorney General of the United States to enter this Plea Agreement on behalf of the United States.

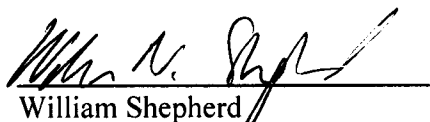
23. A facsimile or PDF signature will be deemed an original signature for the purpose of executing this Plea Agreement. Multiple signature pages are authorized for the purpose of executing this Plea Agreement.

DATED: 4/24/14

Respectfully submitted,

BY: 
Romano Piscioti
Defendant

BY: 
Craig Y. Lee (Special Bar No. A5501111)
Megan E. Gerking (Special Bar No. A5501960)
Trial Attorneys
U.S. Department of Justice
Antitrust Division
450 5th Street NW, Suite 11300
Washington, DC 20530
Tel: 202-307-1044
craig.lee@usdoj.gov


William Shepherd
Holland & Knight
222 Lakeview Avenue, Suite 1000
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

Counsel for Romano Piscioti