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Fines on Cartels

In this issue there is a brief report of the case involving the Graphite Electrodes cartel. The Commission annexed to its Statement on the case a Table, reproduced below, showing the ten highest fines imposed on cartels. It is a reminder of the severity of the penalties likely to follow collective price-fixing and market sharing.

Within the figures showing the "Total Amount" of the fine, there are the different amounts of fine imposed on the individual corporations forming the cartel. These vary widely in most cases, particularly since the adoption of the so-called Leniency Notice, under which members of the cartel who cooperate most readily with the Commission are granted greater leniency. In the Graphite Electrodes case, it was the first time that the Commission had granted a substantial reduction of a fine (70%) under the terms of the Notice. Showa Denko benefited from this reduction, having been the first company to co-operate with, and provide decisive evidence of the cartel to, the Commission.

The ten largest cartel fines
(Those marked with an asterisk were reduced by Court judgments)

Year	Case	Total amount (in €)
1998	TACA	272,940,000
2001	Graphite Electrodes	218,800,000
1994	Carton*	139,280,000
1994	Ciment*	113,377,000
2000	Amino acids	109,990,000
1999	Seamless steel tubes	99,000,000
1998	Preinsulated pipes	92,210,000
1994	Poutrelles*	79,549,000
1986	Polypropylene*	54,613,000
1998	British Sugar*	48,800,000

Source: Commission Statement IP/01/1010, of 18 July, 2001; the Notice is on http://europa.eu.int/comm/competition/antitrust/legislation/96c207_en.html