
RASCHKE VON KNOBELSDORFF HEISER advised on the sale of the leading German wire manufacturer BERKENHOFF to the Chinese POWERWAY GROUP

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RASCHKE VON KNOBELSDORFF HEISER (RKH) has advised the shareholders of the German Berkenhoff GmbH in connection with the sale of the long-established metalworking company to the stock-market listed Powerway Group based in the East Chinese megapolis Ningbo.

The 125-year-old Berkenhoff GmbH is a leading manufacturer of innovative high-tech precision wires. The company at its two sites currently employs about 440 employees. Its annual turnover roughly amounts to € 100 million. After having experienced difficulties from 2004 to 2009 under control of various financial investors, a change in Berkenhoff's shareholders occurred and the company appointed the German consulting firm nexpert AG to support Berkenhoff in its phase of restructuring. Nexpert AG, with offices in Hamburg, Dusseldorf, and Munich, specializes in operative and financial restructuring of industrial enterprises.

Following the successful restructuring of Berkenhoff, various strategic investors from Germany, France, Russia, and China competed for acquiring Berkenhoff. Eventually, the Chinese Powerway Group prevailed in this months-long auction process. Powerway is a global leader in providing non-ferrous alloy bars and precision wires just as those being produced by Berkenhoff. Powerway employs about 440 employees. Its annual turnover amounts to around € 800 million. Yet, the transaction, the details of which are being kept confidential, is subject to approval of the competent anti-trust authorities.

The sellers were advised by Dr. Thorsten Raschke and Dr. Dominik Ziegenhahn (both in the Lead, Partners, Corporate/Restructuring and Corporate/M&A), Dr. Kristian Heiser and Dr. Nico Torka (both Partners, Corporate/M&A), Prof. Dr. Christian Möller (Of Counsel, Tax), and Dr. Jan Hermann (Associate, Corporate/M&A). With regard to merger control procedures the sellers and Berkenhoff GmbH were being advised by Dr. Johanna Kübler of the antitrust law-boutique COMMEO (Frankfurt).

The Powerway Group was advised by Angermann M&A International (Stuttgart) as financial advisor and CMS Hasche Sigle (Hamburg/Shanghai) as legal advisor. Former German Secretary of Defense Rudolf Scharping with his team of RSBK acted as mediator between the parties.

Background

RASCHKE VON KNOBELSDORFF HEISER (RKH) is a Partnership of Lawyers with ten Attorneys-at-law. The law firm was established in 2005 by a spin-off from Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer and today is one of the leading corporate/M&A-boutiques in Germany. Focusing on high-end legal services the law firm concentrates on advising German and foreign clients in complex corporate matters, corporate transactions and corporate litigation. The firm's clients include well-known family-owned companies, German and international industrial and commercial groups, private equity firms as well as banks and other financial service providers.

Contact

Dr. Thorsten Raschke
Partner, Attorney-at-Law
Tel.: +49 40 866 433 0
raschke@rrkh.de

Dr. Dominik Ziegenhahn
Partner, Attorney-at-Law
Tel.: +49 40 866 433 11
ziegenhahn@rrkh.de