

U.S. Watchdog Joins German Investigation of Ford in Russia

By [The Moscow Times](#)

August 19, 2015



The United States' securities watchdog is helping German prosecutors to investigate the alleged payment of bribes by Ford to speed the passage of containers through Russian customs, a source at the U.S. carmaker said on Tuesday.

Ford and Schenker, the freight business of state-owned German rail company Deutsche Bahn, have been under investigation in Germany since 2013 over suspected bribery and other offences related to the busy Russian port of St. Petersburg.

The port is Russia's European gateway with more than 2,000 companies using it for shipments, according to its website, but it is also known among customers for notoriously long delays.

The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has now joined investigations by prosecutors in Cologne, where Ford's European headquarters are based, a source at the carmaker told Reuters, confirming a report in Tuesday's Sueddeutsche Zeitung newspaper.

Two Ford employees, eight current and former workers at Schenker and one staffer from a Russian contractor are under investigation, a spokesman at the Cologne prosecutor's office said.

He said that he could neither confirm nor deny that the SEC is now aiding the investigation. The SEC did not respond immediately to requests for comment.

"Ford is committed to legal compliance and business ethics in all of our operations around the globe, and we expect the same from our vendors," a spokesman at the carmaker's European division said in an emailed response to questions. "We fully support and cooperate with any government inquiry. We do not comment on specific matters involving ongoing proceedings."

The U.S. carmaker last year cut 700 jobs at its plant near St. Petersburg as it grappled with Russia's deteriorating economy and a weak ruble. The plant produces Ford's Focus and Mondeo models.

Berlin-based Deutsche Bahn said it has already dismissed members of staff over the allegations and is continuing internal investigations of several other employees.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2015/08/19/us-watchdog-joins-german-investigation-of-ford-in-russia-a49039>