

Press Releases

Blackstone and Founders Buy Alliance Automotive Group from Weinberg Capital Partners

Paris, August 11, 2014 – Private equity funds managed by Blackstone (“Blackstone”) announce the acquisition, along with the company’s founders, of Alliance Automotive Group, the leading wholesale distributor of automotive parts in France and the UK, from Weinberg Capital Partners.

Alliance Automotive Group is the leading player in the independent automotive aftermarket in France and the UK, operating under the brands GROUPAUTO France, GROUPAUTO UK, Partners, Gef’Auto and Précisium. Alliance Automotive Group is an integrated company with its own buying organisation and a wholesale distribution network comprised of its own subsidiaries and independent distributor members. The Group has 1,500 outlets and 3,500 employees.

Alliance Automotive Group has demonstrated its ability to grow through acquisitions while preserving the identity of existing networks with more than 30 completed transactions supported by Weinberg Capital Partners, including Précisium Group and TPA in France. As a result, the Group sales increased from €540 million in 2006 to €1.2 billion in 2013. Alliance Automotive Group also issued a private bond last November syndicated to a small group of institutional investors.

Lionel Assant, head of European Private Equity at Blackstone, said: “We are delighted to team up with the management team led by Jean-Jacques Lafont and Alistair Brown to acquire Alliance Automotive Group. The company has market-leading positions and an outstanding management team. We look forward to working with them as the company confirms its position as a leading operator in the European market both through organic and acquisition led growth.”

Philippe Klocanas at Weinberg Capital Partners commented: “We are proud to have contributed to Alliance Automotive Group’s growth, partnering with the management team to support its build-up strategy. During Weinberg Capital Partners’ ownership, turnover has doubled as the Group has become the number one operator in France and a leading player in the UK. We very much look forward to the next phase of development with Blackstone, a leading global investor. Their worldwide presence will back the management team to pursue its growth strategy.”

Jean-Jacques Lafont, Chairman and one of the founders of Alliance Automotive Group, added: “Thanks to the continuous support of Weinberg Capital Partners and their long-established track record in B2B distribution, we have been able to accelerate significantly the pace of growth of Alliance Automotive Group that we set up in 1989. Alliance Automotive Group has now become one of the leading European players thanks to an ambitious external growth strategy. We warmly welcome Blackstone as a shareholder to pursue our international expansion.”

About Weinberg Capital Partners: www.weinbergcapital.com

WCP is a French independent asset management company active in two areas: French mid-market buyout and real estate. It has raised more than €800M through dedicated funds. In mid-market buyout, WCP takes majority positions alongside with managers who want to develop the business of their groups. Leveraging its financial and operational expertise, the team has already successfully supported its portfolio companies through an active build-up strategy. In real estate, the fund carries out complex and off market transactions on offices, retail and operational assets (clinics, senior housing, hotels...).

About Blackstone Private Equity

Blackstone has been a global leader in private equity since 1985, with \$68 billion of assets under management. We uncover value by identifying great companies and enhancing their performance by providing strategic capital and outstanding management talent. We aim to grow stronger enterprises, create jobs, and enable our portfolio companies to build lasting value for our investors, their employees and all stakeholders. Further information is available at <http://www.blackstone.com/>. Follow Blackstone on Twitter [@Blackstone](#).