

Vincent Bolloré

Bolloré Group probed over west Africa port deals

French authorities search company's headquarters



Vincent Bolloré © AFP

APRIL 13, 2016 12:42 PM
by: **Michael Stothard** in Paris

French authorities have searched the headquarters of Bolloré Group as part of a sprawling investigation looking into the granting of a number of port concessions in west Africa.

French prosecutors recently started looking into a possible relationship between the Bolloré Group, run by French billionaire [Vincent Bolloré \(http://next.ft.com/content/c3dd3434-6842-11e5-97d0-1456a776a4f5\)](http://next.ft.com/content/c3dd3434-6842-11e5-97d0-1456a776a4f5), and Francis Perez, the president of the Barcelona-based Pefaco Group, said two people familiar with the inquiry.

Pefaco, which runs casinos and hotels in Africa, has been under investigation for four years by the French financial crimes unit.

Now prosecutors are trying to determine whether Mr Perez helped Bolloré Group's African logistics arm win a concession for the port of Conakry in Guinea, granted in 2011, and another for the Lomé Port in Togo in 2010. The searches, which became public on Tuesday, are part of that effort.

Bolloré Group said in a statement, after the searches were reported by France's Le Monde newspaper, that Pefaco and its leaders were "completely unknown" to the company.

It added that the port activities required "considerable investment" and that Bolloré Group was chosen "exclusively" based on its technical know-how and ability to carry out the operation. The company operates 17 ports in Africa.

Lex



(<http://next.ft.com/content/67040666-0185-11e6-ac98-3c15a1aa2e62>)

Vivendi: general mischief

(<http://next.ft.com/content/67040666-0185-11e6-ac98-3c15a1aa2e62>)

Vincent Bolloré has marched all over Italy

Bolloré Group confirmed that searches of the group's headquarters in Puteaux, on the western outskirts of Paris, were carried out on Friday.

Pefaco said: "Pefaco has no relations with the Bolloré Group or its port activities in Africa", adding that the company was "co-operating fully with the French investigation".

Bolloré Africa Logistics has become a powerful force in Africa over several decades with 25,000 employees and 10m sq m of warehouses, workshops and offices.

It has rail concessions in Cameroon, Ivory Coast and Benin. In 2013 a project was launched for the west Africa rail loop to connect Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, Niger, Benin, Togo and Nigeria.

Havas, the communications agency owned by the Bolloré Group, also operates in Africa and has advised President Alpha Condé in Guinea and President Faure Gnassingbé in Togo.

Bolloré Group, which has sales of €10.6bn a year, also has a 14.4 per cent stake in Vivendi, which owns Universal Music

John Gapper



<http://next.ft.com/content/12852942-00c4-11e6-99cb-83242733f755>

Bolloré game of thrones
<http://next.ft.com/content/12852942-00c4-11e6-99cb-83242733f755>

The French media mogul's approach to corporate governance makes Rupert Murdoch look like a saint

Group and broadcaster Canal Plus. Vincent Bolloré was appointed Vivendi chairman in 2014.

Pefaco installs and operates slot machines in gaming halls and bars in Africa. It has more than 280 gaming halls and 350 partner bars in 13 countries.

The company also designs, finances, builds and operates hotels in central and western Africa. Two of its hotels are operational in the Republic of the Congo and another two are under construction.

Print a single copy of this article for personal use. Contact us if you wish to print more to distribute to others. © The Financial Times Ltd.