

ARMOR-IIMAK and Astorg officially become shareholding partners

Following ARMOR's merger with its US competitor IIMAK, giving birth to ARMOR-IIMAK last October, the closing on May 4 of Astorg's entry into the capital of ARMOR-IIMAK as a minority shareholder marks a new stage in the growth strategy of this ARMOR group subsidiary. It represents the ideal opportunity for this global market leader in consumables used in Thermal Transfer printing technology to set out the first milestones in its 2022-2026 strategic roadmap.

Astorg, officially a minority shareholder (40%) of ARMOR-IIMAK

Wednesday, May 4 marks the official entry of the European private equity company Astorg into the capital of ARMOR-IIMAK, an ARMOR group company, as minority shareholder (40%). The capital contribution, the amount of which remains confidential, will support the €150m investment plan over the period of 2022-2026.

"On behalf of the ARMOR Group, I am delighted to be able to plan the future alongside Astorg. This deal has been conducted in the context of renewing our shareholding structure and deploying the ARMOR-IIMAK strategy in the field of traceability", explains Hubert de Boisredon, CEO of the ARMOR group, who, as Executive President of ARMOR-IIMAK, supervises its strategy and governance, including the relationship with Astorg. The operational development of ARMOR-IIMAK is being led by the entity's CEO, Christian Lefort, who joined the ARMOR Group in September 2021.

The first milestone of an ambitious strategic roadmap

ARMOR-IIMAK now has 18 sites around the world: 3 coating sites (production of semi-finished products and transformation into finished products) and 15 slitting sites (transformation into finished products), located in close proximity to its customers. Since the fall of last year, the first synergies have also begun to bear fruit with the launch of the first jointly created ARMOR-IIMAK product, the APX 8, a specialty wax-resin ribbon for flat head printers (labels for pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, cardboard tags, etc.) The IT systems integration project has also been launched in parallel. In support of its growth objectives, a significant proportion of the funds raised from Astorg has been earmarked to finance new acquisitions. And the first tangible projects are already being conducted. In China, an additional coating line has just been installed to increase the wax range capacity and a new transformation unit will come on stream in Shanghai during the second half of the year. In France, a new high-speed coating line will be installed at La Chevrolière site near Nantes in 2023, in addition to an ink production unit. *"This strategic project will provide an additional 20% capacity at the French plant for ink production and coating on thin films",* explains Christian Lefort, CEO of ARMOR-IIMAK. Furthermore, a new coating machine is scheduled to be installed at the US coating site in 2024. *"The objective is to surpass the service levels expected by our partners and to support their ongoing development in the Americas",* adds Christian Lefort. Lastly, a groundbreaking robotization program has also been launched, incorporating 9 additional robotic cells in the transformation units (finished product slitting).

"The recent merger with IIMAK, the partnership with Astorg and the committed investment plan are part of one single dynamic: providing a high-quality service anywhere and anytime, even in the current context of public health uncertainty and geopolitical tensions. Our ambitions for ARMOR-IIMAK come with a deep transformation of the Group, we aim to strengthen our positioning as a credible and reliable industrial partner for all leaders and key stakeholders engaged in social innovation", concludes Hubert de Boisredon.

Astorg was advised by Advancy (Commercial), PWC (Finance), ERM (environment) and Paul Hastings (Legal). ARMOR group was advised by Natixis Partners and Equalis Capital (M&A), LEK (Commercial), PWC (Finance), ACR Avocats (Legal) and Jones Day (Legal and Fiscal).

ARMOR specializes in the industrial formulation of inks and the coating of fine layers onto thin films. The Group is the world leader in the design and manufacture of thermal transfer ribbons for printing variable traceability data on labels and flexible packaging. As a European market leader in innovative and sustainable printing services and consumables, the Group is a pioneer in the development and production of industrial inks and innovative materials, such as organic solar films, coated collectors for electric batteries and bespoke filaments and parts for additive manufacturing. With an international presence, ARMOR has nearly 2,450 employees in some 20 different countries. In 2021, it posted annual revenue of over €403m. Each year the Group invests nearly €30m in industrial equipment and R&D. ARMOR is a responsible company committed to stimulating innovation within society. www.armor-group.com

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