

**AvestaPolarit Distribution invests in new Service Centre facilities in Sheffield, U.K.**

AvestaPolarit Distribution, the UK Sales Company and Service Centre of the stainless steel maker AvestaPolarit has announced an almost £10 million (approx. 14 million euro) investment to fund the purchase of new equipment, including both a state-of-the-art cut-to-length and slitting line for its U.K. service centre and to relocate the current Oldbury facilities, to fully refurbished and modernised buildings on AvestaPolarit's main UK site in Sheffield.

It is anticipated that the new equipment would be fully installed and commissioned by early 2004 and that full capacity would be achieved by the middle of 2004.

Kari Saarinen, Executive Vice President – Group Marketing and Technology, explains "The UK is a very important market for us and our largest home market. If we locate the sales company adjacent to its major supplying mill, we can then ensure that we give customers here the best possible service."

Mark Perrins, Managing Director, AvestaPolarit Distribution continued, "As well as strengthening our technical support to customers, the proposed move would greatly enhance our efficiencies and communications, leading to improved quality, service and long term competitiveness working toward our vision of being the "Best in Stainless"."

In line with current legislation, these changes are the subject of consultation which commences shortly with the workforce at Oldbury. The consultation will consider all reasonable, practicable measures to avoid personal hardship.

The Hot Rolled Plate Service Centre is unaffected and will continue to operate from Blackburn.

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