

Pekka Erkkilä to succeed Ossi Virolainen at the helm of AvestaPolarit

AvestaPolarit's CEO Ossi Virolainen will retire at the end of May 2003. Pekka Erkkilä, currently heading AvestaPolarit's Coil Products Division, has been appointed to succeed Ossi Virolainen as President of AvestaPolarit Oyj Abp as of 1 June 2003. He has also been appointed to Outokumpu's Executive Committee, with membership taking immediate effect.

Dr Jyrki Juusela, CEO of Outokumpu and Chairman of the AvestaPolarit Board, comments on the change: "Ossi Virolainen has himself expressed a wish to use his option to retire one year ahead of turning 60. He has had a long and successful career, stretching over 35 years, with the Outokumpu Group. The past 3-4 years have been exceptionally challenging, first in tough negotiations to forge the combination that led to the formation of AvestaPolarit in January 2001 and then establishing the new AvestaPolarit Group on a firm course of becoming "Best in stainless" according to the original vision. The ambitious growth plans for the company have been pushed forward relentlessly. AvestaPolarit's track record on the stock exchanges in Helsinki and Stockholm as such stands as proof of a job well done and is something that Outokumpu can bank on after acquiring full ownership of AvestaPolarit. I want to thank Ossi for all that he has done for the company and offer him my best wishes for the future. I am at the same time pleased that we have found a well qualified internal candidate to succeed him in Pekka Erkkilä, whom I gladly welcome to join also the Outokumpu Executive Committee."

Ossi Virolainen explains his own decision: "All my years with the Outokumpu Group and especially the last intensive years as CEO for AvestaPolarit have been very rewarding and challenging, but I think that now is the right time for me to step down. AvestaPolarit's epoch as a listed company is coming to an end during this spring. Pending the completion of major investments and restructurings that we have been carrying out, AvestaPolarit is also at the treshold of a new phase of considerable growth in its operations. My colleagues in the top management have all been heavily involved in the crafting of the strategies and are as a team ready to assume responsibility for the implementation. The commitment to AvestaPolarit, our vision and objectives is strong throughout the Group, and I am therefore confident that AvestaPolarit has all that it takes to succeed."

Mr Pekka Erkkilä, MSc (Eng), born 1958, has been President of AvestaPolarit's Coil Products Division since September 2001 and a member of AvestaPolarit's Executive Committee from the very start, initially as Executive Vice President in charge of Business Development and Technology. Prior to the formation of AvestaPolarit, Pekka Erkkilä had a solid career with Outokumpu Steel in Tornio, where he had been employed since 1983, holding managerial positions in both the stainless steel and ferrochrome parts of the integrated production.

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