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V Ä L I N G E E X P A N D S I T S L I C E N C E B A S E O N L A M I N A T E F L O O R I N G S

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- **Välinge Innovation has entered into a license and R&D agreement with 3 of the largest HDF and laminate flooring producers in the world: Kronospan, Kronotex and Kaindl Flooring.**
- **Välinge is, with its more than 30 licensees, the leader in the world on technology related to glue free locking systems for laminate and wood floorings.**
- **Flooring companies which hold 40% of the laminate flooring market and 70% of the wood flooring market in Europe and US have acquired the rights to produce glue free locking systems based on the Välinge licenses and technology.**

This license cooperation has been initiated jointly by Välinge and Välinge's partner and exclusive licensee since 2000, the Berry Group (now part of Beaulieu International Group).

The Berry group has had a long term cooperation with Kronospan on HDF and laminate flooring. This cooperation has now developed to a license agreement on laminate, which gives the new licensees worldwide rights to use the whole Välinge technology protected by 25 patent families.

The major reason for these world leading companies to enter into these license agreements is that they have come to the conclusion that it is not possible to produce competitive laminate floorings without access to Välinge's technology and intellectual property rights (IPRs) protected by 278 registered patents in 41 countries and 215 pending applications in 47 countries.

Välinge and Berry on the other hand have agreed to broaden the license base on laminate further since development of new technology is extremely costly and must be commercialized in large volumes and in cooperation with other parties. This broadening of the license strategy has been applied globally with great success on wood floorings but so far only on a limited basis on laminate floorings. Since 2003, Välinge and Berry have jointly granted about 20 licenses on glue free floorings.

All court cases and patent oppositions in Europe and the US between Berry/Välinge and the new licensees will now be terminated.

"The new agreements will considerably increase our possibilities to further expand our leadership in R&D and IPRs," says Darko Pervan, president of Välinge.

Välinge's development resources will be further increased. New inventions can now be commercialized on an even larger scale and "time to market" will be much shorter. The cooperation agreement also gives Välinge a broad base in HDF and large-scale lamination technology. Cooperation on IPRs with the new licensees and Beaulieu International Group is expected to considerably strengthen the joint patent base, since there are several complementary patents and development projects in the pipeline.

"A major advantage is that the great amount of money we have all spent so far in several legal actions can now be used against other companies who are not willing to respect IPRs, and especially those companies that are not paying any licenses to us or to some of our competitors," says Darko Pervan.

Since 1994, Välinge has been heavily involved in R&D, mainly related to laminate flooring, which was invented by Välinge employees in 1977 – at that time employed by Perstorp AB. Around 30 highly skilled technicians are working full time in cooperation with several consultants and licensees, among them several world-leading companies, to create new technology for hard floating floors.

Välinge is planning to expand its R&D facilities from 5,000 m² to 12,000 m², invest in additional new full size production lines for test production and employ several project managers to support its new licensees.

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