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Gimv backs further growth of Arplas, a Dutch supplier of welding technology for sheet metal applications

Gimv invests approximately EUR 10 million in Arplas Systems, an innovative technology leader in resistance projection welding. Gimv acquires a majority stake, next to the management who will remain shareholder. Goal is to further expand in existing markets, with both existing and new customers, as well as to benefit from recent developments of its aluminium welding capabilities.

Arplas (www.arplassystems.com) is the global leader in the development, application and marketing of a projection welding technology, called the patented 'ArpLas System'. Today, it is used across a number of applications for the automotive industry and is recognized and adopted by major car manufacturers worldwide, a.o. GM, Daimler, Audi, Volkswagen, Tesla, BMW and Fiat. Arplas is headquartered in Amersfoort (the Netherlands) with additional manufacturing and sales facilities in North America, Korea and service representatives in China and Brazil.

The ArpLas System has unique characteristics which provide clear advantages in specific applications, primarily car bodies and hang-on parts (doors, hoods, liftgates). It can be used in narrow spaces and generates highly-qualitative and at the same time visually better welding constructions, as the welding points are almost invisible. Furthermore, it offers cost saving and energy effectiveness compared to conventional welding techniques.

Founded in 1971, Arplas started as a traditional trading company in welding equipment. Dr Pieterman, the current CEO, focused the company on more innovative welding technologies. The ArpLas System was first introduced in 1997 and today already installed in 40 automotive plants worldwide. The management plans further growth in the core automotive market which will be supported by strong underlying market drivers. First of all, there is an increasing number of car models introduced each year and thus more production lines are needed. On top of that, the requirements for emission reductions drive the need to replace steel by more lightweight materials, particularly aluminium. The Arplas technology is very well suited to weld aluminium and the company has developed a very competitive solution to address this high growth market segment.

Sander Van Vreumingen, Partner Gimv Smart Industries, on this transaction: *"We are really excited about this investment. Karel Pieterman and Abe Rijpma have already done a great job developing the technological and commercial position of the company. Now we will join forces to execute on the large growth opportunities out there."*

Dr K. Pieterman, CEO Arplas, commented: *“With Gimv as co shareholder of Arplas we will be able to step up to a next level of expansion. The international footprint and expertise of Gimv makes it possible to accelerate the global sales of the ArpLas System in this challenging automotive market even more.”*

ABOUT GIMV

Gimv is a European investment company with over three decades experience in private equity and venture capital. The company is listed on Euronext Brussels. Gimv currently manages around 1.8 billion EUR (including co-investment partnerships) of investments in about 50 portfolio companies.

As a recognized market leader in selected investment platforms, Gimv identifies entrepreneurial and innovative companies with high-growth potential and supports them in their transformation into market leaders. Gimv's four investment platforms are: Connected Consumer, Health & Care, Smart Industries and Sustainable Cities. Each of these platforms works with a skilled and dedicated team across Gimv's home markets of the Benelux, France and Germany and can count on an extended international network of experts.

More information on Gimv can be found on www.gimv.com.

For further information please contact:

Sander Van Vreumingen, Partner Smart Industries

T +31 70 3 618 623 – sander.vanvreumingen@gimv.com

Frank De Leenheer, Investor Relations & Corporate Communications Manager

T +32 3 290 22 18 – frank.deleenheer@gimv.com