

Armor and IIMAK join forces to become global market leader in thermal transfer ribbons

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The Armor Group recently announced the acquisition of IIMAK (International Imaging Materials, Inc.). The combined thermal transfer organisation will be called Armor-IIMAK with consolidated revenues of more than \$400 million, establishing it as the global market leader in the design and production of thermal transfer ribbons for the printing of variable traceability data on labels and flexible packaging.



Hubert de Boisredon, chairman and CEO of the Armor Group, commented: "Convinced of its strategic importance, I have actively pursued this merger and am especially proud to announce this acquisition. Our main objective is to unify our strengths to benefit our customers, partners and employees."

With a history dating back to the 1980s through a shared license from the Japanese company Fujicopian until 1998, Armor has enjoyed strong growth in Europe, with IIMAK similarly benefitting in the US. Armor-IIMAK now has 1,650 employees producing over 2.5bn m² per annum of thermal transfer ribbons.

Christian Lefort, CEO of Armor-IIMAK who recently joined the Armor Group, will lead the entity. "The paths of our two companies, both historic market leaders in thermal transfer technology, cross once again and will now be irrevocably united. This merger will benefit all our customers and external partners, as well as our employees. I am both delighted and honoured to lead this merger with the full support of everyone at IIMAK and Armor," he said.

The objectives of the new entity include:

- Strengthening its presence in North and South America;
- Offering customers the most comprehensive product portfolio on the market;
- Leveraging joint technological development to enhance existing products and rapidly develop new ones;
- Reducing its carbon footprint through optimised logistics.

Through this merger, Armor-IIMAK will enjoy global industrial coverage via three coating sites, one in each of its regions (Americas, Asia and Europe), and nearly twenty slitting sites.

According to Andrew Fosbrook, managing director of Armor Africa, a subsidiary of the newly branded Armor-IIMAK group, the acquisition and new entity will benefit the African market, as customers will enjoy a broader product range and applications, as well as new developments in the thermal transfer ribbon market.

"This will also mean that our African operations benefit from the support, access to technological expertise and market reach from a global market leader," he added.

Armor Africa, based in Johannesburg, South Africa and its sister company Armor East Africa situated in Nairobi, Kenya,



are the only operations in Africa with thermal transfer coating capabilities that produce jumbo rolls of thermal transfer material that are then slit locally to meet market requirements.

"The majority of these thermal transfer ribbons are produced under our primary brand, inkanto and supplied through partnerships with value-add resellers in the regions.

"We look forward to supplying the most comprehensive range of ribbons in the market and being part of the leading player in the thermal transfer industry," concluded Fosbrook.

For more information, [click here](#).

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About Armor

Armor specialises in the industrial formulation of inks and the coating of thin layers onto thin films. The Group is the global market leader in the design and manufacture of thermal transfer ribbons for printing variable traceability data on labels and flexible packaging. The 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 for additive manufacturing. With an international presence, Armor Group has nearly 2,450 employees in some 20 different countries. In 2020 it posted annual revenue of €274m. 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

About IIMAK

IIMAK is a global developer and manufacturer of printing, imaging and marking consumable products with 1000 employees worldwide. With production sites in the US, Belgium, Brazil, and Mexico, IIMAK is a long-standing TTR specialist, offering a complete range of products. It has also diversified into inkjet inks, direct thermal films and other related products. www.iimak.com

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