

PRESS RELEASE

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## **AVA turns 50: The globally successful quality supplier for industrial valves celebrates anniversary**

In the summer of 2022, Armaturen Vertrieb Alms GmbH (AVA) will celebrate its 50th anniversary. Three certified management systems, huge storage capacities, reliable delivery times and a good portion of entrepreneurial courage characterise the company, which has continuously expanded its competences and developed from a small family business into one of the globally leading wholesalers for industrial valves.

Looking back at the founding of the small family business with eight employees in 1972 to today's globally active valve wholesaler with more than 120 employees and an annual turnover of 50 million euros (2021), the history of AVA describes a remarkable success story. The fittings expert is valued by its national and international customers as a quality supplier and has a Europe-wide sales network, four locations (in Ratingen, Gelsenkirchen, England and the Netherlands), a branch in China for supplier control and its own sales offices in Belgium, France, Finland and Sweden, as well as numerous agencies (in Austria, Hungary and the Czech Republic). AVA works closely with its team of employees and combines years of expertise with the courage to expand. The expansion of the warehouse and delivery capacities and the trust in its own corporate culture have characterised the family business from the very beginning.

### **Foundation and start-up phase**

After years of experience as an executive employee of a leading American valve manufacturer, Klaus Alms ventured into self-employment in the summer of 1972 and founded AVG Armaturen-Vertriebsgesellschaft mbH. In 1981, the company changed its name and took on its current name. Klaus Alms reflects on the founding years: "I started with proper financing. I had a small but experienced team at my disposal from my old employer. We had a modern warehouse that was ideally suited for our first year. Having worked for my old employer for 15 years in the US, Germany and on the European continent, I had relevant experience on the sales side and copied the supply system already running very successfully in the US, which was hardly known in Europe." The combination of in-depth technical know-how, a high-quality product range and fast delivery times, thanks to an extensive warehouse, already paid off in the following years: in 1975, Klaus Alms bought the Holterkamp 1 property in Ratingen, which is still the company's headquarters today. Shortly afterwards, a 2000 square metre warehouse and 300 square metre office space were built, the capacities of which were further expanded in the following years.

## **Successful transition into the 2nd generation**

The transition to the next generation is a significant milestone for any company. After 22 years as managing director of AVA, Klaus Alms handed over the reins to Frank Alms in 1994. The successful transition to the next family generation enables the further successive development and Europe-wide expansion of Armaturen Vertrieb Alms GmbH. Frank Alms relies on the healthy growth of the company, is constantly expanding the Europe-wide distribution network and in 2006 expanded to the Netherlands and in 2009 to Great Britain. The shareholders have invested more than 7 million euros in the expansion of the company in recent years alone, in order to expand its competencies as a leading quality supplier of industrial valves throughout Europe. In 2017, the construction of another external location with offices and further storage space of 800 square metres of AVA took place in Gelsenkirchen, where AVA bundles its activities together with its service sister ASA today. In 2018, AVA acquired another large logistics hall HK4 on Holterkamp, at AVA's headquarters in Ratingen, which was completely converted to meet the company's needs. With this hall, the storage areas were expanded by more than 4,500 square metres, to a total of 8,800 square metres, thus significantly optimising the logistical processes and efficiency in order processing. Thanks to the huge, in-house valve warehouses in Europe, with areas of more than 11,000 square metres, the worldwide customer base benefits from AVA's very high delivery capacity and individual service options.

## **Future visions and challenges**

Despite the ongoing Corona crisis, AVA did not lay off any employees and was even able to avoid short-time work. Thanks to the spacious offices and storage areas, workplaces could be "equalised" and employees were able to work from their home offices at times. This flexibility to adapt to the current situation is part of AVA's core competencies, as is a diverse and trust-based corporate culture that has always been part of AVA's corporate identity. The further digitalisation of the company, sustainable action in the face of the energy transition and securing the leading market position are important topics for the quality supplier. On the occasion of the anniversary, Frank Alms, Chairman of the Management Board, has his sights set on the next few years: "We are looking forward to the coming years, as we continue to rely on the strengths of our family business. Some of our employees have been working for the company for several decades. The high professional competence of our team is the basis for our success. In addition, we will continue to invest in the expansion of our company and try to open up new business areas and maintain our independence as a medium-sized family business." The future generation, which is already in the starting blocks, will also strengthen its local locations as a responsible employer while continuing to develop with international market conditions.

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## **About AVA**

Since 50 years AVA® has been the leading wholesaler of industrial valves according to DIN and ASME standards in Europe. As a long-standing exclusive partner of the leading manufacturers worldwide, AVA serves customers in the chemical and petrochemical industries as well as plant engineering and power plant technology with industrial valves at short notice from four sales and warehouse locations in Germany, the Netherlands and Great Britain.