

Press Release
Grenoble, Paris, February 13, 2019

CM-CIC Investissement and Bpifrance support Nicolas Odet, Yvan Coutaz and the management team in their takeover of Hardis Group

Hardis Group announces a new management team that aims to accelerate the development and to ensure the long-term independence of the consultancy, digital services and independent software company. Nicolas Odet (the future CEO of Hardis Group), Yvan Coutaz (Managing Director) and around thirty managers will hold together nearly a third of the company's capital, alongside CM-CIC Investissement, a the new majority shareholder, and Bpifrance, The founders are also supporting this stage by reinvesting.

Founded in 1984, Hardis Group currently has a turnover of approximately €116 million and has 1,115 employees, based in Grenoble (where the group's head office is located), Paris, Lyon, Lille, Nantes and Bordeaux and further afield in Spain, Benelux and Switzerland. In 2013, a managerial transition process was initiated by the founders, entrusting the general management to Nicolas Odet and Yvan Coutaz, who joined the company in 2000. With founder and CEO Christian Balmain having expressed his desire to retire in 2019, the two directors began the capital transmission process, determined to pursue the company's strategic, people-oriented and economic goals with the support of responsible, committed partners that share the group's values.

With its technological and business expertise, the group can offer tailor-made applications and integrate software components that address the issues of its core sectors (finance, insurance, retail, logistics, industry, energy). Hardis Group is committed to using the most innovative technologies to benefit its clients by giving them a competitive advantage. Hardis Group's Reflex software suite and Eyesee inventory drone enable international companies to meet the challenges of efficient supply chains in warehouses, factories and stores all over the world.

Both investor partners were particularly impressed by the relevance of Hardis Group's model and its singular capacity of innovation that have led to strong growth in Europe and worldwide over the last five years, in a highly competitive sector. They are committed to protecting its long-term independence and supporting its development through controlled organic growth and targeted external growth. With the launch of its 2019-2021 strategic plan, this new Hardis Group will be able to rely on its financial partners to accelerate the transformation of its clients' sales, IT and logistics by using technology and artificial intelligence.

"We approached CM-CIC Investissement because of its ability to provide equity with a long-term vision, in addition to its agility and sector-specific expertise. Bpifrance will provide additional support as an institutional investor, giving us access to its ecosystem and expertise in innovation and international development.

This will enable us to maintain our independence alongside the sector's major groups and to develop our business, particularly in Europe, by targeting growth of more than 10% per year," explains Nicolas Odet, future CEO of Hardis Group.

Yvan Coutaz, Managing Director of Hardis Group, continues: "Our strategy's success is based on the resolutely human model that has characterized us for almost 35 years. This transmission aims to ensure the successful development of our social objectives. Growth and profitability objectives remain unchanged. The structuring of this project made it clear that these values and objectives are shared by our partners CM-CIC Investissement and Bpifrance."

"With genuinely unique expertise as a software vendor, focusing on application development and integration, Hardis Group has demonstrated the relevance of its model in a dynamic and challenging market, supporting its major clients in their business transformation," explains Jean-Christophe Vuillot, Director at CM-CIC Investissement. "The relationship of trust developed with the ambitious and experienced executives has enabled us to successfully complete this strategic investment operation; this is the perfect addition to our portfolio, in synergy with our investments that have their own digitization challenges. Our support as a long-term majority shareholder will help strengthen Hardis Group's capabilities and accelerate its development. CM-CIC Investissement also has about twenty investments within the digital sector that contribute further added value to the support we provide."

Alexis Guinard, Investment Director at Bpifrance, adds: "Hardis Group is a mid-sized company that has reported strong growth over the last 5 years and offers innovative and powerful applications to support companies in their digital transformation, an issue that is particularly important to Bpifrance. Focused on the key challenges in retail, logistics and the industry 4.0, Hardis Group has a very unique position. Thanks to its agile organization, the company will continue to adapt to the fast-paced development of the business. We are pleased to support the new highly-skilled management team and, alongside CM-CIC Investissement, to ensure the group's independency and future international growth."

The operation remains subject to approval by the competition authorities and should be effective by the end of March 2019.

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Consulting

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Strategic due diligence: Roland Berger (Jean-Michel Cagin, Yaroslav Stetsenko)
Legal and corporate due diligence: Duteil-avocats (David Merlet, Cristian Rawlins)
Social, contractual, competitive and financing due diligence: BCTG (Séverin Kullmann)
Fiscal due diligence: Arsène Taxand (Frédéric Teper, Charles Dalarun)
Financing consulting: Pretium (Bénédicte Leneveu)
Management consulting: Fiducial Legal by Lamy avocats (Eric Baroin, Julien Hollier) and CVS (Pierre-Jean Ferry)

Banks

Crédit Agricole Sud Rhône Alpes, BNPP, BNPP SME, CIC Lyonnaise de banque, BECM, CM-CIC Private Debt, Société Générale, LCL

About Hardis Group

Hardis Group, a consulting firm, digital services company and independent software vendor, is committed to accelerating the transformation of its clients' value chains, information systems and supply chain. Remaining independent since its creation in 1984, Hardis Group currently has a turnover of approximately €116 million. It cultivates the spirit of initiative, the creativity and talent development of its 1,115 employees to sustain its growth, and the long-term trust of its 2,500 clients. www.hardis-group.com , www.reflex-logistics.com , www.customer-platform.com

About CM-CIC Investissement

Buyout capital, development capital, risk capital, merger and acquisition consultancy:
CM-CIC Investissement, a subsidiary of Crédit Mutuel Alliance Fédérale, provides comprehensive financing activities to meet companies' equity financing needs. In addition to its professionalism, its resolutely human vision of the profession and its close working relationships with company directors, its long-term support characterizes the success of this approach. CM-CIC Investissement invests its own capital (nearly €3 billion) in approximately 380 companies that make up its equity portfolio. To find out more: www.cmcic-investissement.com

About Bpifrance

Bpifrance is the French national investment bank: it finances businesses – at every stage of their development – through loans, guarantees, equity investments and export insurances. Bpifrance also provides extrafinancial services (training, consultancy...) to help entrepreneurs meet their challenges (innovation, export...). For more information, please visit: www.bpifrance.fr - Follow us on Twitter: @Bpifrance - @BpifrancePresse

