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Management Change at Axopar Boats Oy: Kari Kulojärvi Appointed as New CEO

Axopar Boats Oy's Board of Directors has appointed Kari Kulojärvi as the company's new Chief Executive Officer, effective August 4, 2025. At the same time, Ari-Pekka Saarikangas will step down from his position and support the new CEO until January 2026.

The leadership change supports the company's long-term strategic goals. Axopar Boats Oy is making significant investments in the future, focusing on innovative solutions and new customer experiences in its product range. The aim of the change is to further strengthen the market position and improve the already high customer satisfaction. Kari Kulojärvi brings experience that supports the company's strategic renewal and the achievement of its goals.

Kari Kulojärvi brings over 25 years of international business experience from some of the leading companies. He has held executive roles in product management, product development, and production. Kulojärvi joins Axopar Boats Oy from McKinsey & Company, where he has led the company's Finnish operations and solved strategic challenges for Finnish businesses.

"It is my pleasure to welcome Kari Kulojärvi to Axopar. He has strong experience in transformative business processes and accelerating growth. Kari has demonstrated excellent change leadership, strategic vision, and innovative thinking. He has developed global business operations and built high-performing teams. These are crucial qualities for the CEO of Axopar Boats Oy," says Vesa Laisi, Chair of the Board at Axopar Boats Oy.

For Kari Kulojärvi, Axopar represents a renowned Finnish success story in its field.

"Axopar is an internationally known brand representing innovative and high-quality boatbuilding. Axopar's success shows how it is possible to create a successful new product range with open minded and bold design. It is a privilege for me to lead Axopar into its next chapter," he says.

During the time of the departing CEO Ari-Pekka Saarikangas, the company grew profitably and strengthened its market position.

"I would like to warmly thank Ari-Pekka Saarikangas for his significant contribution to Axopar Boats Oy. He is known for his strong expertise with customers, boats, and business operations. The company is now at a stage where it is natural to transfer leadership to a new CEO," says Chair Vesa Laihi.

For Saarikangas, it has been interesting to be involved in developing and leading a rapidly growing company, where he has been able to utilise over 35 years of expertise in the marine industry.

"I am very pleased with how we have developed Axopar into a global player in the boat market together with the entire staff. I share the Chairman's words that this is a good time for both the company and me personally to move forward," Saarikangas summarizes.