

## Certina Group new owner WPS

# Family business atmosphere returned



From left to right: Giovanni Santamaria, Managing Partner at Certina Group and Paul van den Boogaard, Managing Director WPS Group

**The recent acquisition of WPS by private investor group Certina Group did not come as a complete surprise to Paul van den Boogaard, managing director of WPS Group since June 2023, but he is very happy about it. "With Certina, we are getting back the atmosphere of a family company and are really standing on our own feet again."**

Marcel Slofstra

WPS is originally a very Dutch company, founded in the mid-1980s in North Brabant. After its former founders sold it to Imtech in 1999, the parking specialist was part of the Traffic & Infra Business Unit, until Imtech's bankruptcy in 2015. It was Dutch investment company Egeria that pulled the entire Business Unit out of bankruptcy. This allowed WPS to continue to exist, albeit under the Dynniq Group umbrella. Until the recent acquisition of WPS by private investor group Certina Group.

### Long-term perspective

"It was very special that Egeria acquired WPS back then, but after the sale of the Dynniq Group of which WPS was part until mid-2021, it was clear that they also wanted to sell our company at some point," says Paul van den Boogaard, managing director of the WPS Group. "That was not such a surprise. We are happy with Certina as the new owner. Certina is a private investor with some 750 million in turnover with 20 companies in Europe.

They often hold companies for a long time, the first company they bought they still own even now. The owner of Certina sometimes jokes that he is the longest-serving employee of that company. That offers long-term perspective and that's what we were looking for, in that respect we are in good hands."

### It just has to work

WPS is headquartered in Eindhoven, from where service, sales and R&D take place. "Production for other countries also takes place in Eindhoven. We have standardised our hardware. In doing so, we have succeeded well in identifying the requirements at play in America, Canada and Europe into one robust and reliable hardware product. The products run on ParkID, the heart of our WPS parking platform. ParkID is a subscription-based cloud-based software solution and is continually updated to always match the changing needs of parking facility owners and operators. After all, that is the most important aspect for a parking solution; it just has to work. This is very simple: parking solutions are purchased to make money from them, for example by a car park operator or to prevent inconvenience, such as at hotels."

### Maintaining course

Van den Boogaard does not expect any major change of course within the company. "The philosophy Open and Adaptive, core values we launched with Intertraffic in 2022, we will continue to actively promote. After all, developments in parking management do not stand still. You can see that everywhere, in the past a phone was also just a stand-alone product that was on the sideboard. Nowadays, those devices are part of an entire ecosystem. It is no different with parking systems. Those are connected to the internet or a network and communicate with apps and other software. Parking has become part of a larger infrastructure."

WPS is looking at new opportunities to invest. "We will invest in hardware and software, but also in our own organisation. That way, we will innovate and start offering new services. With only a static parking management system, you won't make it. That's why our system open and adaptive is able to connect to the ecosystem and is easily adaptable. The WPS platform forms the basis of the open and adaptive model.

This platform brings together existing and new devices, from WPS and third parties, software applications and operator services to deliver a seamless parking solution, a parking solution for each individual customer journey. The next big app that might become part of one of our customer journeys can be developed today and be a market leader next year. We can no longer do all that ourselves."

### Focusing on convenience

One of the services Van den Boogaard mentions is aimed at increasing payment convenience for the parking customer: WPS PAY. WPS PAY allows motorists to pay for parking by scanning a QR code on the parking ticket or at on-site signage. "The operator brings this to the attention of parkers, we can support that. We also see that this actually happens automatically. As soon as you see a QR code, you often pick up the telephone to scan it. This is an almost automatic process for most people."

### No disadvantages linked to acquisition

The acquisition has no disadvantages for WPS as yet, says Van den Boogaard. "There is therefore no question of a reorganisation. Of course, the moment of acquisition always causes a certain amount of unrest within an organisation, but within WPS we are used to it, in fact everyone just goes about their business as usual. We are all eager to see where this will lead. The feeling of a family business is actually coming back, which is nice to notice. That family-like climate is very pleasant to work in. Imtech was a really big club, Certina suits us better."

### Proud

Van den Boogaard is clearly proud of the company and the people who work there. "We have everything in-house; the production, installation and service engineers and software support engineers. That sets us apart from other players; people in the company really know our solutions inside out. The operational reliability of a parking system is very important and working with our own dedicated people certainly contributes to that. We also want to continue investing in those people."

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