NEWS

Eiffage chief passes away

Changes planned at French contractor as former chairman steps back into old role on a temporary basis

The post of chairman and CEO at Eiffage are to be separated following the sudden death of Pierre Berger last week.

Berger, who was chairman and CEO of French-based contractor died of a heart attack at the age of 47. He joined the company in 2011.

A committee chaired by director Thérèse Cornil has been charged with finding a successor to Berger by the end of February 2016.

A board meeting after his death decided to separate the roles, with vice chairman and former chairman Jean-Francois Xavier taking on the role of chairman again for the time being. He recommended the appointment of Max Roche as CEO, again until a permanent successor is named.

The board paid tribute to Berger, saying, “His exceptional human and professional qualities were crucial to the development of the group, improving its profitability and advancing Eiffage shares.

“Pierre Berger was animated by an exceptional energy and a passion for the group.”

He took over as CEO in July 2011, having previously worked for another French contractor, Vinci. Eiffage was Europe’s sixth-largest contractor, and number three in France, in the CE-100 league table this year.

Growth predicted for Poland

The Polish construction industry is set for three years of uninterrupted growth, according to market research company, PMR. Growth is said to reach 6% for 2015, despite hopes of achieving 9% earlier this year.

It anticipates that the industry’s performance will be driven by increased growth in the second half of the year. Predictions for 2016 are more optimistic, with growth expected to be 8%, meaning output could reach approximately PLN 101 billion (€24.8 billion). On the other hand, predictions for 2017 are even stronger, driven by a number of large-scale road contracts. The market may still expand in 2018, but the company believes growth will slow down from 2019. Importantly, in the absence of mega projects, such as those required to hold the Euro 2012 football tournament, PMR does not expect any dramatic upsurge in investment in the coming years, but rather a stable stream of new projects until 2022.

Figures show that civil engineering construction will remain the largest market. It is expected to represent 57.1% of total construction output, and its share will increase at the expense of non-residential construction, predicted to be 30.6%.

APR acquisition

Temporary power rental specialist APR Energy is to be acquired by a private equity consortium in a deal which values the company at £165 million (€199 million). The Apple Bidco consortium, controlled by Fairfax Financial Holdings, ACQ Equity Management, and Albright Capital Management, paid £175 (€243) per share for the company.

On top of that, the consortium said it would supply additional funding of US$200 million (€181 million) to recapitalise the company, around US$150 million (€136 million) of which would be used to repay a loan that APR Energy took out.

APR Energy reported a half-year loss after tax of US$64.5 million (€65.6 million).