

BUSINESS magazine



Focus on –

Consulting & services

Metal processing industry

Transport & logistics

Grasping opportunities as they come

Slovakia is one of the emerging economies of the recently expanded EU, and its firms are breaking out of this previously landlocked economy, to take a vital part in Europe's future. A great obstacle to growth and stability has been the volatility of the EU versus Slovakia's currency, the Koruna. In 2009, Slovakia will join the Euro Zone – and steel equipment maker Enco spol s r.o. will at last be able to trade on a level playing field with its EU rivals.

The firm has come a long way since its previous incarnation as a state monopoly called Politechna. As a state-owned company, the firm had been one of the few that were licensed to do business with the West. After privatisation, Enco introduced modern CNC machines and milling cutters to its operation, and began to export its own highly trained specialists to other countries. Today the group fulfils contracts for Man Diesel, as well as KUKA.

Enco is a group with four subsidiaries. The first, Steel Form, is specialised in the processing of sheet metal for the manufacture of hospital equipment, such as examination chairs, operating tables, laboratory furniture and fittings, and hospital trolley-beds. Its range of products is completed by clean room structural parts and clean room furniture as well as fire proof doors and frames. Staffed by 100 workers, the seven-year-old company is equipped with

punch presses, compacter presses, automated welding machines and TRUMPF CNC-programmable machines of the latest generation. The division has its own independent production facilities and performs contract work. It processes thin stainless steel sheeting, copper and aluminium.

KUKA-Enco in Dubnica is equipped with its own design studio and CAD software, and executes tasks on behalf of its twin company, KUKA in Augsburg. Orders are executed after the digital information is transmitted via the Internet from Augsburg. In the field of tool making, the company manufactures extensive tools for the automotive industry.

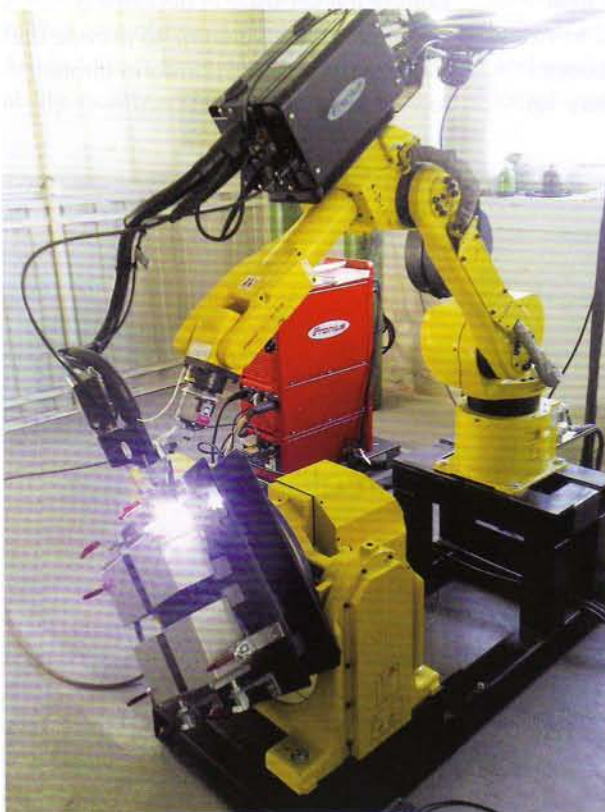
ZVS-Enco of Dubnica has been specialised in the work-

ing of sheet metal since the end of the 1990s, and employs 250 people. Its workshop is equipped with laser-cutter machines, which are capable of processing much thicker metal sheets. Its production is geared towards switch cabinets for Slovakia's atomic power stations and, due to their vital role, all components are made to the highest specifications.

Metallform s.r.o is active in the processing of thin metal sheeting, to make pellet burning ovens and fireplaces that are designed in-house. Founded in three years ago, the firm employs 100 people. All of Enco's subsidiaries are either ISO 9001 or TUV-Bayern certified. In total, Enco employs 450 people and last year their work generated a turnover of 13 million EUR. Peter Belák (Dip. Business Management), Steel Form's General Manager, learned his craft while working for Bayer in Leverkusen. He is optimistic about the company's prospects in the coming years. "Growth would be welcome, but we must negotiate the best deals that we possibly can, in order to maintain profitability. Currently we have to make allowances for the volatility between the Koruna and the Euro. It is also important for us to keep up with foreign companies who wish to invest here, and to ensure that labour costs do not rise and make us uncompetitive. And, lastly, we must maintain our current price levels, so that we continue to service the many valuable contracts that we already have. All of our products are geared towards exports, and we are happy to re-



Steel Form's workshop



Robotic welding



Steel Form manufactures structural parts and furniture for clean rooms

ceive approaches from prospective clients."

"Enco's success is the result of dedication and plain hard work," Mr. Belák continues. "We use every available opportunity to improve our business. Luck is important, but the trick is to use those lucky breaks to the full. We were already an internationally active concern, and the company's privatisa-

tion was followed by entry into the EU. Additionally, our Managing Director, Mr. Medved, has made some extremely valuable contacts in Germany over the past few years."

Mr. Belák's vision is for developing stable partnerships and generating increased business in the coming years. "We must achieve

higher levels of serial production with maximum added value, via improved quality and by holding to deadlines. Production costs have to be lowered and productivity has to be increased still further. When the Euro comes, we will be in perfect commercial position to take advantage of all the opportunities that membership of the European Union offers."



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Uncompromisingly good

With a combination of versatility, flexibility and outstanding service, Wahlen GmbH & Co. KG has successfully positioned itself in the market. Based in Eschweiler, Germany, the enterprise specialises in metal construction. Over the years, it has frequently adjusted its product scope to meet changing market conditions.

"More and more, the customer is looking for individualised products, solution-oriented consulting and personal service," says Hugo Frantzen, Wahlen's managing director. "Not mediocrity, but perfection rule the day! From the beginning, we have striven to meet these standards – and have succeeded. In all aspects of our business, we serve individual customer demands – even unusual ones." In addition to the production of metal parts for machinery and trade fair stands, the production spectrum covers steel stairs, doors, aluminium and plastic windows,

and the assembly and repair of conservatories. The primary activity, however, is the production and assembly of building facades. Countless numbers of successfully completed jobs for customers in both industry and trade underscore Wahlen's expertise in these areas. Leading companies like DM, Plus and Aixtron are on its reference list. "Our ability as a medium-sized enterprise to respond to the market is the basis of our success," adds Mr. Frantzen. "In the future, service and outstanding performance will remain our highest priorities."



Best references: Aixtron is one of Wahlen's content clients



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