

# C-SUITE



**CIPRIAN-  
DAN  
COSTEA**

**VICE CHAIRMAN &  
BOARD  
REPRESENTATIVE  
OF AUTONOVA**

**POWERED BY ASIA CEO COMMUNITY  
& CSUITE XCHANGE**

# OVERVIEW

CAN YOU PROVIDE AN OVERVIEW OF AUTONOVA'S JOURNEY AND HIGHLIGHT SOME KEY MILESTONES AND TRANSFORMATIONS?

Autonova is a company with one of the most interesting journeys in the Romanian economy. Founded in 1954 as a state-owned company, it was privatized after the Revolution of 1989 and today the ownership of Autonova is concentrated in a strong business group from the Transylvanian part of Romania. Our major milestones were the selection as a car brake system manufacturer by the Romanian brand of cars Dacia, in the 1980s. The transition period of the 90s was, as it is known, one with many challenges for the Romanian economy and for the state enterprises, but Autonova managed to move forward on its own path and in 1996 the company was privatized. During that years we started the business relationship with the South Korean Daewoo corporation, which had just invested in Romania. The business with Daewoo meant for Autonova the manufacture of hydraulic clutch equipment.

The years that followed after 2010 represented a crystallization of future developments. The concentration of the shareholding allowed the taking of some decisions that strengthened the company, and starting from 2012, the path of business diversification was followed. Thus, that year began the business relationship with two clients that are still extremely important today: Punch Powertrain from Belgium and the Japanese Makita corporation, through Makita Europe.



## AS THE VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AT AUTONOVA, WHAT IS YOUR ROLE IN SHAPING THE COMPANY'S STRATEGIC DIRECTION AND DRIVING ITS GROWTH?

In my position of Vice Chairman I have a very wide range of responsibilities. Being an executive Vice Chairman, I am involved in the making process of all the strategic decisions of our company and I supervise the implementation of the board's decisions by the C-suite executives. At Board of Directors level I am the Chairman of the Audit Committee and member in the Corporate Governance Committee and I am empowered by the colleagues to supervise all the European Union financed projects submitted to authorities by our company.

I am also in charge with the long term sustainability of our business and as a consequence I am involved in creating the strategies which can offer the right thing for society and various stakeholders, as well as with the integration of ESG priorities throughout our organization. I am also in charge with the Corporate Social Responsibility strategies of our company. On the other side I am representing the company internationally and at relevant business meetings.



# COMPETITIVE

HOW DOES THE COMPANY DIFFERENTIATE ITSELF FROM COMPETITORS IN THE MARKET?

Our opinion is that there are many key points that make us better and brighter than other companies. First of all, we are a quick decision-making organization. The different levels of management have access to me directly and as a consequence all the key issues can go through me, directly to the major shareholder. It's very practical when discussing investments and cost related issues with our clients. We are also a leader in implementing the ESG's within our organization, and as a consequence we are leaders regarding this approach in Romania.



# ADVANTAGE

ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC ADVANTAGES OR CHALLENGES THAT COME WITH BEING A ROMANIAN-OWNED COMPANY IN THE AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY?

There are advantages and challenges too, in a permanently variable proportion. As a Romanian company - as I explained earlier - we can have a very quick decision-making process. This is a key issue. Parts of the global automotive industry are relocating in Europe and the opportunities for future developments are also very high. We as a Romanian company will try to take our advantages from this phenomenon. The major challenge is to keep up with the cost and the quality our global competitors.





**CAN YOU PROVIDE SOME EXAMPLES OF HOW THE COMPANY HAS DEMONSTRATED THIS ABILITY AND DELIVERED VALUE TO ITS PARTNERS, BOTH IN THE AUTOMOTIVE AND NON-AUTOMOTIVE SECTORS?**

Of course, we can provide such examples: the most important is that we were able to develop together with our partners specially dedicated lines for manufacturing parts, both in the automotive sector and in the non-automobile sector. We worked together with our clients to make the best of it! At the same time, through the experience and professionalism of our employees in the technical, quality and project management departments, we have demonstrated the ability to develop any product (and connected processes) together with our customers, which we can produce in serial conditions at the highest industry standards.

A very well-known example here in that our company managed to implement such processes during the Covid-19 pandemic, so we were continuously working, without having to stop or close our activity for not a single day. Our clients valued very much this because we were able to help them to maintain their supply chain. It was very appreciated that we delivered parts to several European countries and to Asia, when in that part of the world many suppliers had to “stay at home” during the lock down.

**IN A HIGHLY COMPETITIVE MARKET,  
WHAT STRATEGIES HAS AUTONOVA  
IMPLEMENTED TO MAINTAIN ITS  
COMPETITIVENESS AND POSITION  
ITSELF AS A RELIABLE PARTNER FOR  
ITS CUSTOMERS?**

We are aware that the new technologies are the future. Our future strategy takes into consideration that alongside with the robotization process that we already started, to bring in our day to day business the Artificial Intelligence and the latest and best technologies. We adopted in the Board of Directors a Declaration regarding the implementation of AI and the ESG reporting. On another hand, hand in hand with the new technologies we are providing help and assistance to our engineers to be updated with the use and utility of such new technologies. So, we are also developing our employees skills to match the future expectations.



**REMAIN  
THE LEADER**

# SUPPLY CHAIN



**AUTONOVA  
OPERATES IN A  
GLOBAL SUPPLY  
CHAIN ECOSYSTEM.  
HOW DOES THE  
COMPANY MANAGE  
ITS SUPPLY CHAIN TO  
ENSURE TIMELY  
DELIVERY OF  
COMPONENTS AND  
ASSEMBLIES TO ITS  
CUSTOMERS?**

It's complicated in the actual global uncertain environment. For example, following the sensitive situation in the neighboring country, Ukraine, we had to expand the panel of some suppliers. Our approach is the best cost-based standard. This doesn't mean necessarily the lowest possible cost. Based on it we are searching for the diversification of our suppliers at the same quality level index taking into consideration also the safety of our relationship, the geostrategic risks and the logistic related issues. We are never working with one but with minimum two suppliers for each essential parts that we need to be supplied. We are monitoring very seriously our business and reputational risk and as a part of it, we consider a safe supply chain as a core part of our strategies.

# INTERNATIONAL

---



## **CAN YOU DISCUSS THE COMPANY'S APPROACH TO EXPANDING ITS PRESENCE IN INTERNATIONAL MARKETS?**

We have a serious international presence, that I am in charge with. Our strategy to be international is to have global clients, as we have now. We are just to start in this autumn a new project, having as final client one of the top 4 global car producers. If they will need our presence in other jurisdiction then we are open to discuss to invest in order to be in the proximity of our client. We also want to expand the range of our clients with some new global corporations. Another line that we are approaching, an atypical one, is to be very present at many relevant global fairs and international conferences in order to increase the visibility and the value of our brand. I am proud that the valuated amount of our Autonova brand has been continuously growing during the last 8 years. A more valued brand across continents, makes our company more desired for collaboration by possible new international partners.



## HOW DOES AUTONOVA ENSURE HIGH-QUALITY STANDARDS IN ITS MANUFACTURING PROCESSES AND DELIVER PRODUCTS THAT MEET OR EXCEED CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS?

I am emphasizing again some very important points in our strategies: we are using new technologies, we are preparing our employees for having the needed skills for the future technologies, we are very carefully monitoring the sustainability of our business model, we take a very close look to ESGs. We consider that the climate related costs are rising the value of our products.

At the same time, we are managing the supply chain very carefully and with each -moment back-ups. Last but not least we are working permanently with our clients so that - together - to develop all the new products, the new processes, or to productively implement their new requirements.

*Charmaine  
Cheung*

**Editted by**

## LOOKING AHEAD, WHAT ARE AUTONOVA'S PLANS AND GOALS FOR THE FUTURE?

Our immediate goal is to successfully start the new project that we are to start in this autumn and to see the ramp-up stage going according to our planification. On mid-term we are planning to expand the range of our customers with some global brands and possibly to expand our presence in other locations, following the development of our client's businesses.

Another plan is to be one step ahead our competitors when we are talking about the equipment and the technologies that we are using and to have an as high as possible implementation of artificial intelligence in our processes.

ASIA CEO COMMUNITY IS NOW  
ON LINKEDIN! COME & JOIN US



Linked **in**

ASIA CEO COMMUNITY IS NOW  
ON FACEBOOK! COME & JOIN US



**COME  
AND  
JOIN  
US**

**FEEL FREE TO CONTACT**



[ceo@asiaceo.club](mailto:ceo@asiaceo.club)



Lemmi Centre, unit 1703, 17/F, No.  
50 Hoi Yuen Rd, Kwun Tong, Hong  
Kong



[www.asiaceo.club](http://www.asiaceo.club)



+ 852 3590 3939