

Interview: Audrius Tutlys - Country Manager, Teva

Lithuania



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Audrius Tutlys, country manager at Teva Lithuania, highlights the importance of Teva in Lithuania, based not only on its broad product offering but also its manufacturing capabilities and shares his willingness to position Teva as a true partner of the government in making Lithuania a European biotech center.

Can you please introduce yourself to our international audience?

I am a medical doctor by educational background having graduated from Vilnius University more than 20 years ago. By that time, Lithuania was passing through a challenging situation from the economic standpoint and I wanted to develop my professional career in a dynamic area such as the pharmaceutical industry, which was strongly emerging after our independence from the Soviet Union back in 1987.

Hence, in 1998, I joined a local company called Biofa that was producing biotechnology medicines, which was quite unique at that time in this region. Then, in 2002, Sicor acquired Biofa and, after two years, Teva acquired the combined company - in which I have been building up my career ever since.

Several M&As have directly affected you since you joined Biofa back in 1998 when Sicor acquired it in 2002, the subsequent absorption of the latter by Teva in 2004, and more recently with Actavis. How would you describe your journey through this hectic

corporate operations timeline?

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There are two models of growth: organic and inorganic. On one side, the organic one is based on developing the own portfolio, which is mostly used by the innovative side of the pharmaceutical industry. On the other side, the inorganic growth model consists of acquiring others' capabilities or products and this is widely used by generic players such as Teva.

It is never boring to be in fast changing areas like the pharmaceutical industry and dynamic companies such as Teva. Indeed, several M&As came after Teva acquired Sicor back in 2004 – Actavis being the most recent in 2016. That being said, it is quite challenging to keep up the pace with the company's transformation and, as managers, it is our duty to find the synergies that every corporate operation offers to strengthen the local footprint of Teva in each country.

How important is the legacy of Sicor in the current positioning of Teva in Lithuania?

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Due to the aforementioned acquisition, Teva strengthened its positioning in three directions: manufacturing, R&D, and commercial. However, due to headquarters' decision, our R&D center was moved in 2016 to the US where Teva is developing a R&D hub for global operations.

I would like to stress that Lithuania's positioning is quite unique due to the inherited manufacturing plant from Sicor, which is specialized in manufacturing high added-value biosimilars that are exported to more than 50 countries not only in Europe but also in different continents such as America and Asia. This unique legacy positions Teva as a key pillar in the Lithuanian ecosystem beyond just the pharmaceutical industry.

Over the last years we have been strongly focused on developing our portfolio bringing solutions that meet the local needs. As a result, I am delighted to confirm that we are the largest pharmaceutical player in the Baltics in terms of sales and, concretely, we are positioned within the top three players in the Lithuanian market with more than 200 professionals as well as 300 medicines marketed in the country.

What have been your main strategies to lead the Lithuanian affiliate to this great success?

Successfully navigating through the different acquisitions has been a cornerstone in our success. This type of corporate operation creates certain uncertainty and, therefore, it is crucial to have all

the team fully aligned in this transformation. Thus, our local highly motivated team in combination with a solid and promising portfolio have been the main drivers of bringing Teva to the position that it holds in Lithuania.

I am delighted to share that we have been able to experience high single digit growth over the last years being as one of Teva's best performing affiliates in the CEE region.

What are the reasons that support Lithuania as a manufacturing hub for the company?

Firstly, we have a great team in place that has the full knowledge about manufacturing biotechnology products. Secondly, we have a top-notch manufacturing plant inherited from Sicor that has been updated with the latest technologies. Indeed, we have successfully overcome several quality audits from the FDA and the EMA. Thirdly, the economic environment in Lithuania not only offers a stable and predictable business frame but also a really attractive fiscal scheme. Fourthly, last but not least, the labor and production costs are lower than some of our neighbor big countries in Europe such as France and Germany.

Lithuania has officially expressed its ambitions to become a European centre for biotechnology by 2020. How achievable is such an ambition?

In my opinion, this support still remains as an intention rather than as actual facts. Indeed, the pharmaceutical industry expects more support from the government in this direction in order to raise Lithuania's positioning as an attractive and competitive destination for FDI investments in the biotech world. That being said, we are already supporting this ambition and I aim to position Teva as a true partner of the Lithuanian government to accelerate such a transition.

What is your assessment of the talent pool in the country in general and how ready the local talent to lead this transition to becoming a European biotech center?

I believe that the development of the talent pool starts from school and, in this regard, we are already organizing several school tours for students to our manufacturing plant. Additionally, developing customized programs in collaboration with universities is crucial to ensure that the universities are developing the local human capital in accordance with the industry's needs. On top of that, I am proud to share that the European Union has already allocated some funds to establish several R&D valleys in Lithuania that will certainly raise the bar of innovation but also of human capital in the country.

You are heading one of the largest pharmaceutical companies in the country and the Lithuanian healthcare system is passing through structured changes. What do you want

Teva's contribution to the Lithuanian healthcare system to be?

Teva is a global pharmaceutical company worldwide known for its generics business. Aligned with this position, we are providing more than 300 medicines to the Lithuanian population and have the largest portfolio amongst the pharmaceutical industry in the country. Hence, we are bringing high quality but also affordable solutions to target national health burdens such as cardiovascular, CNS and antibiotics, among many others. My ambitions are to enhance the Lithuanian patients' access to our broad offering of solutions in a sustainable way for the National Health Insurance Fund as well as our corporate management.

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