Interview: Goran Djuric – Managing Director, EuroCons Group, Serbia



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Goran Djuric, the founder of EuroCons Group, shares an overview of the rationale and business scope of the company's activities while underlining the importance of bringing innovative solutions to the market. Further, he discusses the particular initiatives the company is involved in, as well as sharing his advice for entrepreneurs beginning their journey.

EuroCons Group has been present in the Serbian market since 2003. As a founder, can you share the rationale behind setting up the company, as well as providing the scope of your service offering here?

When I established my company 14 years ago, the idea was to offer turn-key solutions to the pharmaceutical and life science market. I worked for Hemofarm for 11 years, and during this time I realized that companies similar to Hemofarm who required those type of services had to work with foreign players who were usually from Austria, Germany or Italy. What characterized those service providers was European prices which were often too high for our market. So the idea was to establish a local player in the field that would price itself competitively. Further, the premise from the beginning was to have a group of companies offering turnkey solutions in the area of clean rooms. These companies would provide state-of-the-art equipment comparable to that of leading multinational companies, primarily in the pharmaceutical industry, but with the intention of being at the disposal to other sectors, as well.

Shortly after, in 2006, we founded three other companies: BIRO PLUS, LAB PROVA and DARNICO. We bought Biro Plus, a state-owned company, on the public tender, during the privatization period. The group has been present in the market since its establishment in 1954, and we believed in its long-term expertise, so we decided to invest.

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During the same year we established DARNICO, the company responsible for assembling and installation of the clean rooms, processes and production equipment, completing industrial facilities for the manufacturing. Some of our clients in that field include GEA, STERIS, MERCHESINI group amongst others. While working as an engineer in Hemofarm, I realized how vital the after-sales service is.

The third company established that year is LAB PROVA, an air quality and filtration company which precisely checks the air quality in clean rooms, laboratories and industrial plants. It is the first accredited laboratory responsible for testing, while adhering to certified methods and all critical parameters described by standards from ISO 14644 series. These high-quality certificates and standards pertain to the cleanrooms and associated controlled environments. Not only is this a first in Serbia, but also in the entire ex-Yugoslavian region. Lab Prova is an exclusive representative of US company PMS, the British company TSI Instruments and Danish company ELLAB.

The newest addition to the group is ECONS, based in Zagreb, Croatia. So far, we have two employees, but the whole technical support comes from Serbia. This year we decided to fully integrate Econs to our group, as it was originally based as partnership company. As we consider the Croatian market to be quite interesting, this will allow us to establish our presence there.

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We have seen massive growth since or foundation: from two to 75 employees currently, and we have further expanded our service offering. We continuously strive to provide the most innovative services to our clients.

EuroCons offers many different products and services to its clients looks to further diversify the products that it will have in the future. What are the fundamental projects you would like to highlight?

Our clients include the biggest and the most innovative companies. We thrive on delivering state-of-the-art technology and sharing the newest ideas with our consumers. For the past year, we have been educating our customers about the new standards across Europe in air filtration which will be

implemented in 2018. We see quite harrowing and impactful data from the World Health Organisation, with the numbers of people dying from pollution-related sicknesses. We are glad that the population in Serbia is becoming more and more focused on their health, and that they take the opportunity to learn more. What we have done is to raise awareness and focus on education almost two years in advance, as we enjoy being ahead of the game and ahead of what is yet to come – what's more is that we know that our customers appreciate it. This is what I would like to highlight: we are not only traders, selling the best equipment, but we are here to help our customers to find the best solutions. We endeavor to educate them on the latest technologies and standards. We invest a lot of time and resources in this pursuit, but we know that in the long-term it is far better to be well equipped for the present to better tackle problems in the future.

Air filtration is one of the crucial segments of our business amongst others such as clean rooms. In the clean room area, we enjoy excellent brand recognition, customers recognize our services and offerings, and we do not only focus on the pharmaceutical industry but beyond.

For example, we are currently cooperating with YURA, a South Korean company, on a project requiring 7000 square meters of clean room space, for production of components for electric cars. We got this project together with our local partners, and we are happy to see clean rooms are used more and more in different industries.

We also design the new building and research centre for BioSense Institute of Novi Sad, who have a project focused on the implementation of IT technology in agriculture. They were recognized on the international stage, as they won a prestigious European competition, followed by Oxford and Cambridge. They also placed first in Los Angeles on Syngenta Crop Challenge in Analytics Winner Announced

Another project we are truly proud of is the cooperation with West Pharmaceuticals Services, one of the biggest companies designing and manufacturing pharmaceutical packaging. They have the plan to double their production. In this specific project, they engaged and chose us from the competition from all around the world trying to work with them. It is a full-service project, EPCMV standing for Engineering, Procurement, Construction, Manufacturing and Validation. It is still ongoing, and we are very proud and excited to see the outcomes.

How important are quality standards for EuroCons Group?

Our vision is to provide the industry with the most innovative services on a turnkey basis, from the designing, construction, and installation of the equipment to validating, servicing and after sales support according to the highest standards. We are the first company in Serbia to obtain the ISO

9001:2008 certificate for engineering work in the pharmaceutical industry. Quality is crucial to our services, that’s why we have implemented the Integrated Management systems, the quality system ISO 9001:2015, environmental system ISO 14001:2015 and the occupational health and safety, OHSAS 18001:2007

What can companies learn from EuroCon’s success, and what is the plan for the future?

We focus on giving back to the community. For example, we have donated equipment to the Vrsac Hospital, Institute for Health Care for Mother and Child of Serbia, Maternity Hospital in Belgrade, and also National Association of Parents of Children which are Cancer Patients. We are trying to help as much as we can.

We have achieved this success thanks to our dedicated team of employees, who are truly passionate and well-educated; they are experts in the field. They are responsible for the four departments and are working very closely with our clients to provide them with the best solutions. I do not focus on the profits. What I am very proud of, is my team, that is enjoying what they do, working hard and growing with the company. They are present, whenever there is opportunity they capture it, they find new projects and have new ideas. Turnover is of less importance to me than having my employees providing the best quality services to our long-term partners, while enjoying what they do.

Another cornerstone I am proud of is our presence leading the market and with state-of-the-art technology. I am incredibly confident that our products are the best in the world, positioned for the long-term, and I am optimistic that customers will choose quality with the premium price that it requires. Our products and services may be expensive than our competitors, but that is the price you must pay for excellent standards, long-term features, a reliable and trustworthy partnership and cutting-edge technologies. We face a lot of competition from India and China who offer cheaper versions of our products to our clients, yet they often choose us because they are aware of the quality they receive from EuroCons Group. We are focused, we have a vision, and we will continue to offer the best products and the best solutions on the market. That’s why companies like Pfizer in Belgium, Novartis in Russia, and West Pharmaceutical choose us to offer our services. Our motto is TRUST AND LONG-TERM COOPERATION, and we try to reflect that in our everyday business. The plan for the future involves continuity of the best quality services, as well as exploring more countries. At the moment, we are also responsible for Bulgaria and Romania for one of our program, and we have taken a keen interest in entering the Scandinavian market.

What would your advice be for someone who is just starting their entrepreneurial journey?

There are three pillars to successes: to work very hard, to believe in yourself and to enjoy what you are doing. Without hard work, it is not possible to achieve success honestly and transparently. You also need to fully trust your team and surround yourself with the people that are more knowledgeable than you are in their chosen areas. That’s what I have done, and I know my team is very specialized – they have many expertise in specific fields. These tips sound straightforward, but they have been working for me since our foundation.

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