



INTERNATIONAL

## HANSA-FLEX Romania

### *Close to the customer, bordering the Carpathians*

*A browse on the Internet and a phone call marked the beginnings of the HANSA-FLEX success story in Romania. It was the business reference website "Wer liefert was" (Who supplies what) which Romanians Nicolae Tasu and Stefan Anton consulted in their search for a hydraulics supplier. What they found was HANSA-FLEX. But to tell the story from the beginning: The pair had been working up until the end of 1994 for a state-owned hydraulics corporation. Its customers were constantly demanding better product quality, and that was what ultimately led Nicolae Tasu and his wife Anca to establish their own company, building also on their sound market knowledge.*

And so the history of HANSA-FLEX in Romania began in early 1995, with a phone call. It was during that call that Thomas Armerding on the other end of the line brought up the question of a collaboration between HANSA-FLEX and a company in Romania. Following a successful first order completed for a Romanian customer, the new collaboration was initially trialled by way of a joint venture. Following on from that start-up phase, Thomas and Joachim Armerding, together with Nicolae and Anca Tasu, established HANSA-FLEX Romania in October 1997 in the capital, Bucharest.

Romanian industry is characterised primarily by the manufacture of industrial and transport machinery. The country's key trading partners are the EU – Romania is aiming to become an EU member state itself in 2007 – together with China, Russia and Turkey. Another major industry is oil refining. There is an enormous potential customer base for HANSA-FLEX Romania in those sectors, which it targets through outlets such as the annual "TIB" technical trade fair in Bucharest. HANSA-FLEX Romania has already acquired a major engineering company as a customer, in the US-based WMW (World Machinery Works). HANSA-FLEX Romania also benefits from the personal contacts of its founders with their former customers when it comes to acquiring new accounts.

The road network in Romania is very outdated – part of the legacy of the former regime. Up until 2004 there was just one 100 km stretch of motorway in the country, between Bucharest and Pitesti. Consequently, work has been ongoing for a number of years to modernise the transit routes and build new motorways. Now there is a second motorway, which will soon link Bucharest to Constanta, the port city on the Black Sea. Two more motorways, linking Romania to Hungary, are under construction. The railway network is being modernised too. HANSA-FLEX Romania is working for the WIEBE and Swietelski corporations in that field. Nicolae Tasu sees potential for developing business among major road-building companies. The Strabag corporation is already one of HANSA-FLEX Romania's key accounts.

Being located on the Black Sea, Romania also has a shipbuilding tradition of course. The former state-owned shipyards were sold to the Damen corporation of Denmark, Aker of Norway and Daewoo of South Korea, all of whom are now HANSA-FLEX customers.



HANSA-FLEX Romania aims to add continually over the coming years to its existing current network of four branches – as well as Bucharest, also in Timisoara Timigs (in the west of the country), in Cluj-Napoca (in Transylvania, in the heart of Romania) and in the port city of Constanta – in order to enhance its presence close to customers in the major towns and cities especially. With its second branch in Timisoara Timigs, HANSA-FLEX Romania quite literally achieved closeness to its customer base by initially moving into offices on the premises of its first customer – an arrangement from which both sides profited.