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We want to differentiate ourselves through innovation and creativity

Interview with Răzvan Diaconescu, General Manager, IMPULS-Leasing Romania

One of the six subsidiaries of the Austrian group IMPULS-Leasing International GmbH, the company IMPULS-Leasing Romania, established in 2006 as part of a long-term regional development plan of the group, recorded better results in 2023 compared to 2022, remaining one of the most important players in car financing in our country. It continued to invest in technology and innovation, in the development of existing partnerships and the development of new ones. Positive results also characterize the financing of "green" projects for the purchase of low-emission vehicles, electric cars and plug-in hybrids, as well as for the creation of photovoltaic parks. In 2024, the company is in an advanced phase of implementing the ILINCA "One stop finance" project, which covers all the requirements necessary to sign the leasing contract via chatbot. The accelerated robotization process continues this year by adding a new Client Service chatbot flow for the company's insurance broker, as well as by implementing "Robotic Process Automation" functions for the robotization of internal processes

Given that the economic environment in Romania was dominated last year by volatility and uncertainty in business, which primarily affected investments, did you achieve what you set as your target - the company's results in 2023 to be above those in 2022?

In 2023, we managed to record better results compared to 2022 thanks to a combination of factors and strategies adaptable to the economic environment. First of all, we prioritized effective risk management and increased flexibility in adapting to market changes. We invested in technology and innovation to streamline our processes and quickly respond to customer needs in a digitalized environment. We also strengthened relationships with our traditional partners and at the same time developed new partnerships, offering customized solutions to meet the specific requirements of our customers.

In addition, we are a dedicated and motivated team that was able to stay focused on our strategic objectives and act quickly in the face of challenges arising in this economic context.

According to data published by ALB Romania (Romanian Leasing Association), in 2023, car financing in financial leasing in Romania recorded an acquisition value over 27% higher than in 2022 (8,778.24 million lei compared to 6,908.95 million lei). The company you lead focuses since its inception on 100% car financing, compared to this statistic, do you think we are talking about a representative increase in the profile assets financed in leasing or was a good part of it generated by the record inflation in 2023?

It is obvious that last year's significant jump in financial leasing financing in Romania can be attributed to a combination of factors, such as inflation, price increases etc., but this makes us remain committed to carefully monitoring the market and adapting our strategy to be competitive in this dynamic environment.

As the same statistics shows, the highest growth for the segment of vehicles financed in financial leasing was for cars. In this context, did IMPULS-Leasing manage to remain, as a financier, the leader of the financial leasing market in the passenger car sector in 2023?

Yes, I can confirm that IMPULS-Leasing Romania (ILRO) remained one of the most important players in car financing in Romania in 2023. This team result can be attributed both to the partnerships for which we developed adapted products and services, and to the digitalization



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process that offers customers fast and efficient financing solutions, as well as tools for simpler contract management.

How did the company you are leading position itself in 2023, in terms of coverage with new financing contracts for the light and heavy vehicle segment?

As previously mentioned, we have strengthened strategic partnerships with importers and dealers of both light and heavy vehicles, which has allowed us to have a wide range of models and options for our customers. In addition, we have invested in technology to facilitate the sales and contract management processes of customers, whether it is a fleet of light or heavy vehicles, for both small and medium-sized companies and corporate customers.



After the steps taken by the company last year, what is the current status of the "One stop finance" project, which involves rapid financing of the client in the showroom?

The ILINCA "One stop finance" project has progressed significantly and we are currently in the advanced stage of implementing all the requirements necessary to sign the leasing contract via the chatbot. The client will come to the showroom, choose their car and in a maximum of 30 minutes, with the help of the electronic signature, they will be able to have the leasing contract.

Will the accelerated robotization process carried out last year within the company reach a new stage in 2024?

The accelerated robotization process also records a significant evolution in 2024 by adding a new Client Service chatbot flow for our insurance broker and also by implementing "Robotic Process Automation" for internal processes, which helped us reduce the time and effort required for daily activities, thus allowing our team to focus on more important and strategic projects.

Following the strategy of the group to which it belongs, to what extent does IMPULS-Leasing Romania have "green" financing as a distinct objective?

In 2023, "green" financing represented a significant part of IMPULS-Leasing's business and the results were encouraging, both in number and in financed volume, recording an increase in both the financing of zero or low-emission vehicles, such as electric and plug-in hybrid cars, and of photovoltaic parks. In this context, we can also discuss heavy machinery financing for companies whose business is to support greening and recycling projects. In conclusion, last year's results regarding "green" financing were positive and reflect our ongoing commitment to sustainability in the leasing sector.

We are pursuing this sustainability process both at the group level and in Romania, with IMPULS-Leasing's fleet consisting of low-emission vehicles of over 80%. At the same time, we have adopted a "green lifestyle" by installing photovoltaic panels at our headquarters in Bucharest. Investments will also continue in our branches in the country, the first of which is the Iași branch, which already has photovoltaic panels installed.

What are the first conclusions regarding the introduction of eFactura for clients and leasing companies? What advantages and, possibly, disadvantages of this new project would be worth noting?

The introduction of electronic invoices, in addition to reducing the traditional costs required for invoicing (consumables, archiving and transmission costs), offers the possibility of automating the

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import process of invoices downloaded from SPV (a single communication channel for all companies) directly into accounting programs and provides certainty that invoices are transmitted/received on time. The main disadvantage would be that the SPV system does not function correctly or there are interruptions in it, which would generate problems in the companies' accounting.

The group you are part of - Raiffeisen-IMPULS-Leasing (a subsidiary of Raiffeisenlandesbank Oberosterreich in Austria), which recently celebrated 40 years of activity, is present in Austria, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Germany, Poland and in our country. In your opinion, are there any particularities of the leasing market and subsidiary in Romania, compared to the other countries where the group is active?

Obviously, there are differences between the markets in which the other subsidiaries of the group operate, these being influenced by the economic and legislative context of each country but also by the cultural specificity of the client and business partner. As for ILRO, the particularity within the group is given by the exclusive orientation towards financing the automotive sector. The position of IMPULS-Leasing Romania has always been based on the fact that we want to differentiate ourselves in the market through innovation and creativity, both at the level of our partners and clients.

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