

Crises Test the Strength of AURA

Interview with the owner and general director of AURA, Mr. Filip Engelsmann



Mr. Director, the covid pandemic is hopefully behind us, but there is the Russian invasion of Ukraine with all its consequences and we are struggling with the energy crisis. How does your company experience and manage all the difficulties?

We are indeed not living in easy times. The past year has tested us all in every way – economically, militarily, in terms of health and morally. It is positive that we have been able to partly go back to face-to-face meetings, appointments, seminars and training sessions to compensate for the handicap of personal relationships. We appreciated the standard course of the Future Forces 2022 trade fair in Prague Letňany with the possibility of meetings with domestic and foreign customers and partners. We presented here innovations in the field of crisis logistics, material lifecycle management, controlled document distribution and cataloguing of assets supplied to the armed

forces. Furthermore, we were happy to praise already the 28th meeting of the users of MC CATALOGUE, the most widely used codification software in the world which is produced by AURA, this time in Bratislava. Once again, we were able to personally experience the traditional meeting of the Czech defence and security community, which followed the annual meeting of the representative editorial board of the Review magazine. But what I could hardly have imagined, and unfortunately neither the self-proclaimed "crisis" experts, was the invasion of Ukraine by Russian armed forces with all its consequences, including an energy crisis that Europe cannot deal with. It is obvious that AURA, as well as our entire republic, the European Union and other world communities must work very intensively and in a coordinated manner to eliminate the current catastrophic crises.

AURA is a renowned Czech exporter of information systems for military logistics. Is it currently able to respond to predictable changes and adapt its portfolio to new requirements?

For more than thirty years, AURA has consistently focused on the information support of logistics processes. It actively applies its long-term acquired knowledge and experience in this area in the development and modernization of the Logistics Information System, abbreviated as ISL, which supports military logistics of all components of the armed forces in an integrated manner. This year, our company made a contract with the Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic not only for the support and maintenance of ISL, but also for its evaluation. The deterioration of the security situation

in Europe and crucial importance of logistics support for the operational capability of the troops have contributed to the fact that the Ministry of Defence has become increasingly aware of the strategic and irreplaceable importance of high-quality, stable and available information support in this area, which is provided by our product – ISL. This was also reflected in the conclusion of the contract, thanks to which the Ministry of Defence is guaranteed the availability of necessary services in case of declaration of a state of national emergency or war. The conclusion of this contract is a challenge and major commitment for our company.

As for new customers, a significant event and a recent milestone for AURA is the delivery of our Logistics Information System for the State Emergency Service of Ukraine. We are thus successful in fulfilling our long-term goals, which is to maintain our position of the best in the codification world and to follow up on a much higher goal, i.e. to offer sophisticated comprehensive solutions such as an integrated logistics information system.

Your MC CATALOGUE remains the most widely used codification software in the world. What can you tell us about its development?

One of our best development teams, led by Mr. Roman Hanzal, works on the development and implementation of MC CATALOGUE on a permanent and systematic basis. I have no fear that we could abandon our leading position in the world market. On the contrary, despite all the difficulties that all of us have had to overcome recently, we have succeeded in expanding our exclusi-



ve codification territory. Especially in the Arab world, for example in Qatar, Jordan or Algeria. But we have also been successful in other countries. I very much appreciate that the honourable Japanese government considers AURA to be a trusted supplier for the Japanese state procurement market. In this sense we have received a relevant Qualification Notice issued by the Japanese government. We are currently paying great attention to the training and care of our codification software customer. For example, we organized a webinar on NDER this year, which was attended by more than 70 participants from 18 countries around the world. We have now started intensive preparations for the well-known and traditional NCS College, which will take place in Brno at the turn of August and September 2023. In our educational activities, we make extensive use of Publi – our multimedia e-library, which is playing an increasingly important role as an effective platform for the Defence and Security Industry Association to communicate information about its members' products to potential customers in Czechia and abroad.

Is your company preparing something new also in the field of practical codification for the defence industry, i.e. in the activities of the codification agency?

Those who need to codify their produ-

cts, which they supply to the department of Defence must have noticed significant changes, almost an earthquake of a lower magnitude on the Richter scale, in this part of the codification contract clause fulfillment of a purchase contract. In connection with its national scope and legislative changes in the field of international exchange of codification data, the National Codification Bureau is switching to a new codification tool, WEB-KAT, which will be a mandatory

software tool for all certified agencies. This codification tool based on MC CATALOGUE was supplied by our company, which won the tender. In the further development we expect a close connection with ISL, specifically its Catalogue module. Another positive piece of news is that our Codification agency won the tender for the screening and codification of items for LOM, s.p., which is a significant order in the field of codification in Czechia.

Mr. Director, is there anything else you would like to say in conclusion?

Yes, I would, and I'll be very laconic. "Acta non verba", as the former French military leader and Minister of War Lazare Hoche said. It means actions not words, we have had too many of those already.

The interview was prepared by Antonín Svěrák

