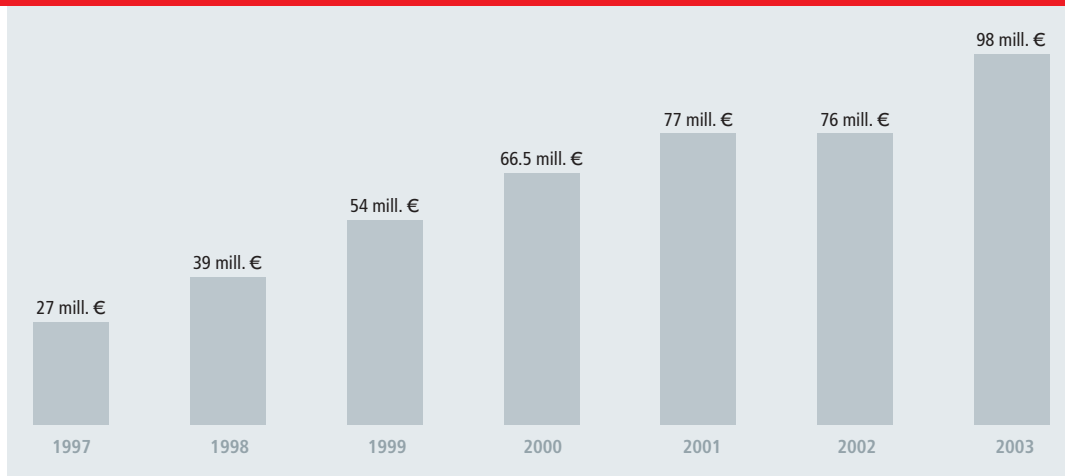


Beckhoff announces 29 percent increase in sales



Managing director Hans Beckhoff said:
"The expansion of our production and storage areas was a prerequisite for being able to successfully meet the increasing sales volume and increase productivity."

→ After a short "breathing space" in 2002, Beckhoff Industrie Elektronik, Verl, Germany, is once again on the familiar road to success. With an increase of 29% in 2003, growth is back to that of previous years. The specialist for PC-based control technology achieved worldwide sales of 98 million euros, thereby successfully breaking away from the still soft economic conditions of the domestic market.



The course is set for the future

The basis for success is the continuous introduction of new products and basic technologies, and the consistent expansion of its international distribution network. In 2003, the ambitious target of being present in more than 50 countries has been achieved. Hans Beckhoff, managing director of Beckhoff, sees his company's strategy of increased involvement in the international market confirmed: "Our investments in a national and international distribution structure over recent years are now paying off." We achieved good growth on the domestic market, but most significant was the export business with an increase of more than 40%. The Beckhoff subsidiaries in Switzerland, Austria, Finland, Sweden, Poland, China, USA and the new subsidiary in Italy, recorded high growth rates throughout. Exports now make up 37% of sales. By the end of 2003, Beckhoff Industrie Elektronik had 470 staff (+10% compared with the previous year).

In 2004 the company expects further growth in the international market. Plans are in place to continue the expansion of the distribution network, with particular emphasis on North America and China. Increased involvement in southern and eastern Europe is also envisaged. At the beginning of this year, Beckhoff opened an agency for Russia in Moscow. The recently established Beckhoff branch in Lithuania will deal with Latvia and Belarus. Further new agencies in Bulgaria and

Romania, Portugal, Greece and Croatia consolidate the distribution network for Beckhoff products in Europe. The presence on the Asian market has been intensified with agencies in South Korea and Japan.

Having surpassed the ambitious sales forecasts for last year, managing director Hans Beckhoff is confident about the future: "The improvement in the economic situation and the development of new technologies are positive signs for the rest of the current year. One example is EtherCAT, our Ethernet-based fieldbus system for industrial automation, which is characterized by outstanding performance and particularly simple handling." EtherCAT was first presented at the Hanover Fair 2003 and generated significant interest as one of the technological highlights. Volume delivery of the first EtherCAT products is scheduled for the end of this year. Together with the market introduction of further product innovations and extensions, the course is set for the future.