



50 YEARS ROULARTA

1970-1980. Roularta launches the Belgian newsmagazines Knack, Trends and Sportmagazine for Flanders, and Le Vif, Trends/Tendances and Sport/Foot Magazine for French-speaking Belgium.

ATTRACTIVE ANNUAL RESULT



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Roularta Media Group achieved in 2003 an **operating profit (EBIT)** of 42.2 million euros (+53.4%) and a **net current profit** of 23.9 million euros (+69.9%). **Operating cash flow (EBIT-DA)** rose from 46.8 to 58.4 million euros (+24.8%). Roularta Media Group posted in 2003 a **profit before taxes** of 29.4 million euros or twice the 2002 figure. 13.3 million euros of taxes were recorded compared with 11.6 million euros in 2002. **Net profit (group's share)** rose five-fold from 3.2 to 16.0 million euros.

This attractive annual result reflects improved earnings in all divisions. Despite the still weak advertising market, turnover grew in every area. Freesheets grew by 2% with the success of De Zondag and the Steps City magazines, offsetting the fall in income from personal ads in the De Streekkrant/De Weekkrant group (much less steep, though, than that of the national jobs market). Newspaper advertising sales (Krant van West-Vlaanderen group) grew by 4.5%. Magazine advertising sales rose by 13.4%, partly from domestic and foreign acquisitions, partly through internal growth by 2% despite lower income from Vacature (- 2.6 million euros), from which Roularta withdrew in July 2003. TV and Radio advertising income was up 7.5%.

Income from the readers' market grew by 24.5%, partly from domestic and foreign acquisitions, and partly from growth of existing magazines (+ 8.5%).

Global **operating income** rose by 4.1% to 458.6 million euros and **turnover** by 2.9% to 436.2 million euros. These low growth figures are explained by the third party printing activities (-24.9%), which in the first half of 2002

were still partly determined by the participation in the MPG printing concentration, which provided a greater quantity of external commercial printing orders, and by 23.1% lower turnover at Vogue Trading Video (optical disks) caused by the difficult market environment.

Group profits, on the other hand, grew significantly, reflecting the constant optimisation of prepress production processes, cost management in every area, lower paper prices and a number of acquisitions. These acquisitions brought with them restructuring costs, all of which were recognised in 2003, but also profits from the intended synergies. The takeovers of Biblo in Belgium and the Aguesseau group in France went entirely according to plan.

Given the need to finance these takeovers, Roularta Media Group finished 2003 with a very low debt position and a **gearing** of 16% (net financial debt/shareholders' equity).

The board of directors will be proposing to the general meeting that it declare a **dividend** of 0.50 euro per share. ■

This attractive annual result was made possible by improved results in all divisions.