

Europe

As in North America, performance in Europe was mixed. Our consumer-focused businesses in continental Europe experienced very weak demand during the year. The rise in the cost of living impacted consumer demand for technology products. As a result, we recorded revenue and operating profit declines. Conversely, our Pro Tech businesses in Europe performed well. There was good post-Covid recovery in our continental European AV business, with good growth in Germany and Italy and general B2B demand was robust.

Our business in Ireland performed well and recorded another year of good profit growth. In the UK we delivered an improved performance this year. Although the technology market in the UK was difficult, driven by a weak economic outlook and our UK revenues declined, the operational and cost performance of the business was much improved year on year following a very difficult prior year. Our UK business, which operates predominantly in the high volume, lower margin 'Info Tech' market, is well placed to continue to improve and is a key focus to drive an improvement in divisional return on capital employed (ROCE).