

REGULATIONS ON ENERGY EXPENSES

Within a couple of days, micro, small and medium size enterprises will be finally able to budget their 2023 energy expenses. Based on the EU Regulation of 6 October 2022 (2022/1854), Member States are permitted to implement measures to artificially freeze prices for the delivery of electric energy to qualified entities. Poland has taken advantage of this opportunity.

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Prices in Europe • D 4,00 € • A 4,20 € • B 4,20 € • E 4,20 € • I 4,20 € • L 4,20 € • NL 4,80 € • PT 4,20 € • CH 4,60 CHF • CZ 129 CZK • F 4,40 €

BUSINESS | CULTURE | PEOPLE

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POLES AT THE ARCHITECTURE MASTERPRIZE

Architecture Master-Prize (AMP) is a global architecture competition based in Los Angeles designed to promote, appreciate and display high-quality architectural designs around the world. This year recognitions went to 3 designers and studios from Poland. Congratulations to BXB Studio, Cavatina and Adela Moss.

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INVEST IN POLAND

WILL GREENTECHS SAVE THE WORLD?

Sometimes they are small, sometimes big, but they all want the best for our planet. It is still quite an unusual approach in business, but luckily there are more and more greentechs, i.e. companies operating for climate reasons. Interestingly, not only small technology companies - startups - are setting out to change the world. Often interesting projects are developed by social enterprises that create jobs, shorten supply chains, and close raw materials in a closed loop. Our country, economy and planet need greentechs.

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HOLD ON TO YOUR DEMOCRACY

Xisha is a Belarusian artist and a political refugee living in Warsaw. Graduated from The Belarusian Academy of Arts in Minsk in 1996, she's been a soldier with the art as a weapon ever since.

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ONE DAY IN KRAKÓW

by Adam Larson

The largest market square in Europe, Kraków's rynek is the center of a UNESCO World Heritage Site that has survived more than half a millennium of plagues, uprisings, and world wars.

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FROM OFFSHORING TO FRIENDSHORING

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Russia's invasion of Ukraine has accelerated changes in the existing model of the functioning of the world economy. Supply chain resilience is gaining in importance. The EU is facing a major challenge of reducing its dependence. At present, 76%

of oil and 68% of gas imports in the EU are from non-OECD countries. Read the executive summary of the report "The decade of economic resilience. From offshoring to partial friendshoring," published by the Polish Economic Institute, a think-tank.

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 Katarzyna Braiter
Editor in Chief

”

November fills us with a certain nostalgia, related to All Saints' Day and the passing of time. We stop for a moment to look back at those who are no longer with us. But for our loved ones we should look ahead, boldly into the future. Just like the Ukrainians who, despite the ongoing war, think about rebuilding their country and living a normal life.

Poles, although emotionally at war alongside our Ukrainian neighbors, try to live normally and even live faster and to the fullest. Our hunger for life will be needed to give strength to those who need us across our eastern border.

When I look at full hotels in and around Warsaw, although summer is over and hardly anyone is going on a November vacation, I am glad that life goes on even more fully. I am glad that many businesses are flourishing and that a lot of foreign investments are still being made. Some wait for the war to end, but by then it may be too late, their seats will already be taken.

How do you view the time change? For owls like me, sleeping longer is fine. However, there is a discussion whether changing the time twice a year is beneficial for our health and economy. What is your opinion on this? Is it worth changing our own biological clocks?

cartoon



data point



Most Poles have helped refugees from Ukraine

In the period February to the end of June, 70.2% of households in Poland helped inhabitants from war-affected Ukraine - the Central Statistical Office (GUS) reported. The most frequently indicated forms of assistance were: donations in kind - approximately 4/5 households and financial assistance (direct or through organizations) - approximately 2/3. In the first quarter of 2022, 69.9% of Polish households helped refugees from Ukraine and in the second quarter of 2022, 53.3%. This was help both in Poland and for people staying in Ukraine.

The dominant forms of assistance were: donations in kind - approx. 4/5 households; financial aid (directly or through organizations) - approx. 2/3. According to GUS, approx. 6% of households helped refugees from Ukraine in Poland, inter alia, in finding a job, taking care of everyday matters or taking care of loved ones. Approx. 3% helped in the vicinity of border crossings, at reception points, accommodation facilities, aid centers or collection points for material gifts. Also approx. 3% among the helpers accepted refugees from Ukraine into their homes or made their premises available to them. In the first quarter (from the beginning of the Russian invasion on a massive scale on February 24), also approx. 3% of households provided transport assistance.

Self-employed persons helped most often - 81.2% in the first quarter and 63.6% in the second quarter; employees - 74.9% and 57.4%, respectively. Slightly less - farmers, retirees and pensioners. Generally speaking, those who could afford it most often helped. From the group of 20% of the richest people helped refugees, 77.5% of farms in the first quarter and 60.9% in second. But in each income bracket it was no less than 63.8% in the first quarter (from February 24) and 47.5% in the second quarter.

The groups of Poles helping refugees were relatively numerous regardless of the number of inhabitants of a town, but the highest percentage of helping refugees was recorded in towns with a population of 500,000. or more inhabitants - 75.3% in the first quarter and 61.9% in the second quarter.

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OPEN for the future

The Municipal Solar Power Plant in Gorzów Wielkopolski

Gorzów Wielkopolski is preparing to build the Municipal Solar Power Plant - a photovoltaic farm with a target capacity of 250 MW, according to spokesperson of the Municipal Office of Gorzów Wielkopolski, Wiesław Ciepiela. The first electricity from the city's solar farm is slated to come online in 2024.

"I can call the project of the Municipal Solar Power Plant, which we are presenting today, a historical project, unprece-

ented on a national scale. It is part of two important issues for the modern world - care for ecology, environmental issues and or ensuring access to energy," said Mayor of Gorzów Wielkopolski Jacek Wójcicki.

The works on the project were commissioned by the city authorities in April 2021. The estimated value of the investment, which is to be implemented on the basis of private-public partnership, exceeds PLN 500



photo credit: City of Gorzów Wielkopolski/Lukasz Kulczyński

million. The Inneko company, representing the city, already has valid administrative and location decisions and decisions on environmental conditions. Currently the city is looking for

an adviser who will help to develop the best economic and legal model for the factory's operation and a model for financing this investment. "We need such an advisor, because the core activity

of Inneko is waste management and our knowledge in energy matters requires the support of professionals," explained Maciej Symeryak, vice president of the board of Inneko.



photo credit: ustka.pl

Ustka will be PGE's offshore service port

An operational and service base for the PGE Group's offshore wind farms and the Competence Center for Offshore Wind Energy will be built in the Port of Ustka. PGE Baltica, which implements the PGE Group's offshore program, presented plans for the deve-

lopment of port areas for the needs of offshore projects.

"The decision to establish our future operational and service base in Ustka is an important step in the implementation of PGE Group projects related to offshore wind energy. Our investment will change

not only the face of the port, we are convinced it will also be an impulse for the development of the entire region and the creation of new jobs," said Wojciech Dąbrowski, President of the Management Board of PGE Polska Grupa Energetyczna.

Metropolis of Science

Academic centers build the rank and prestige of cities, which is why the Metropolis of Upper Silesia and Zagłębie supports universities in increasing the attractiveness of their educational offer, and rewards authors of the best diploma theses. This is part of a wider project called Metropolis of Science, a package of financial and organizational tools aimed at strengthening the role of GZM as an academic and research and development center.

One of the basic tools is the Science Support Fund, established in 2019, thanks to which public and private universities can obtain funding for the organization of classes with world-class scientists representing universities such as Stanford, Cambridge, Harvard and Oxford.

This year, the Metropolis extended the scope of the fund to four more areas: supporting doctoral students and researchers; innovative teaching methods; competitions and scientific events; encouraging students to study at GZM.

"The economic transformation of our region has been going on almost continuously for over



Metropolis of Upper Silesia and Zagłębie supports universities in increasing the attractiveness of their educational offer, and rewards authors of the best diploma theses.



photo credit: Metropolia GZM

two decades. Heavy industry, such as mining and metallurgy, began to give way to new technologies. We want to create a knowledge-based economy

and we have great predispositions to do so. There are 24 public and private universities in the GZM area, educating about 89,000 students. More figura-

tively speaking: in today's Metropolis we have more students than miners," said Kazimierz Karolczak, chairman of the board of GZM.



Identification of the largest dependencies shows that 8% of EU imports are exposed to a small number of suppliers and the EU's low production potential. More than half of the products concern four key ecosystems: electronics, health, energy-intensive sectors and RES.

critical raw materials than conventional power plants. Given that for 11 of 30 critical raw materials the EU's dependence on imports exceeds 85%, securing supplies of those raw materials will be a major challenge," says Magdalena Maj, the head of the climate and energy team at the Polish Economic Institute.

At the same time, identification of the largest dependencies shows that 8% of EU imports are exposed to a small number of suppliers and the EU's low production potential. More than half of the products concern four key ecosystems: electronics, health, energy-intensive sectors and RES. Those should be the priority areas for the EU's diversification and reshoring activities to focus on.

Economic resilience is not all Ensuring 'hard security' is the most important task of states. Owing to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, it is necessary to increase military spending for modernizing armed forces and improving preparedness for various scenarios of international developments.

"In making economic policy adjustments, it is vital to be aware that the arms industry is also subject to dependencies going beyond the EU Member States, or even beyond NATO allies or OECD members. It must also be remembered that increases in military spending will not only limit possible investment in other public sectors, but they will also reduce the economic opportunities to create incentives to secure supply chains. Improving the resilience of supply chains and taking care of 'hard security' will involve strict co-operation within the EU and among allies. Close cooperation is needed to reduce the exposure to dangerous dependencies in each country rather than only from the perspective of the EU," says Łukasz Baszczak, an analyst of the behavioral economics team at the Polish Economic Institute.

Source: The Polish Economic Institute

SUPPLY CHAIN RESILIENCE KEY TO NEW MODE OF GLOBALIZATION

Executive summary of the report "The decade of economic resilience. From offshoring to partial friendshoring," published by the Polish Economic Institute, a think-tank.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has accelerated changes in the existing model of the functioning of the world economy. Supply chain resilience is gaining in importance. The EU is facing a major challenge of reducing its dependence. At present, 76% of oil and 68% of gas imports in the EU are from non-OECD countries. Simultaneously, for as many as 11 of the 30 raw materials that are critical to the energy transition, the EU's dependence on imports exceeds 85%. More than 7% of EU imports are products with a high degree of dependence on deliveries from outside the EU-27, including over 4% among key manufacturing ecosystems such as electronics, energy and health. The EU is also twice as dependent as the US on demand in non-OECD countries.

Therefore, changes in the current supply chain are essential, according to the Polish Economic Institute's report 'The decade of economic resilience. From offshoring to partial friendshoring'.

'For several years at least, there have been lively debates on ne-

arshoring, or the shortening of supply chains, and on reshoring, i.e. the relocation of production facilities back to home countries. We are witnessing a shift from mere discussions to globalization changes gaining momentum. 2020 and 2021 saw a reversal of the 20-year trend regarding the location of greenfield investment, with more such investments located in de-

veloped countries. In 2021, this was \$142 billion higher than in developing countries. Russia's invasion of Ukraine marked the end of the current model of globalization.

"Countries and businesses have been considering friendshoring, or the transfer of production to groups of countries with similar values. Friendshoring is also increasingly attractive due to rising production costs in countries such as China, with unit labor costs 285% higher than two decades ago," says Marek Wąsiński, the head of the world economy team at the Polish Economic Institute.

The US-China trade war, the pandemic and Russian aggression have been changing globalization

It began with the trade dispute between the United States and China, leading to changes in the functioning of supply chains in sectors affected by additional tariffs. Next, the COVID-19 pandemic shook the production network's stability: lockdowns led to delays in deliveries and product shortages. Subsequently, maritime transport could not keep up with the economic recovery and prices increased as much as tenfold.

Russian aggression has added political insecurity, which goes far beyond Eastern Europe, as a major consideration in invest-

ment calculations. It can be seen as the symbolic start of a period in which economic resilience will be a priority.

It is also reflected in the fact that the Savills Nearshoring Index, evaluating the attractiveness of production locations, ranked seven European countries among the top ten performers. They were as follows: the Czech Republic, Portugal, Austria, the United Kingdom, Finland, Sweden and Poland.

It is of key importance for the EU to become independent of imported energy commodities

A strong catalyst for change toward friendshoring may be the energy crisis that Europe is experiencing as a result of its overdependence on energy imports.

"The EU has been dependent on Russian fossil fuels for too long and the Russian invasion of Ukraine will force the acceleration of the energy transition. But the transition is a process related to the availability of critical raw materials. To build a 1 MW offshore wind farm, more than 15 tonnes of them are needed – nearly ninefold times more than for a gas-fired power plant and over sixfold more than for a coal-fired power plant. In the case of wind farms and photovoltaics, the most consumed materials are copper, zinc and silicon.

"Nuclear energy is also characterized by higher demand for



More than 7% of EU imports are products with a high degree of dependence on deliveries from outside the EU-27, including over 4% among key manufacturing ecosystems such as electronics, energy and health.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING PLANS SPOOK POLISH BOND MARKETS

With 17.2% inflation, double-digit negative real interest rates and rising fiscal and current-account deficits, Poland's \$674 billion economy could easily tip over into recession, analysts warn.



Jo Harper

"Things have gotten crazy," Wojciech Stepień, a Warsaw-based analyst at BNP Paribas, told Bloomberg recently. What spooks investors most it seems is when markets fear domestic policy makers are turning their backs on combating inflation to push economic growth with their eyes on an upcoming election. Poland's government faces an election at the latest in about 11 months and has been busy reinforcing spending decisions that will likely help the ruling party, Law and Justice's (PiS) electoral base.

"Poland is painfully seeing what happens when investors begin to fear that policymakers are giving up the fight against inflation in favor of maintaining economic growth before next year's elections," wrote Bloomberg.

For this reason, yields on the Polish 10-year bonds have broken through 9% in a month, up 3 percentage points, reflecting doubts Polish decision makers can keep inflation under control while also boosting spending.

A year ago, with a 3.5% yield on 10-year bonds, the state had to pay 35 billion zlotys (\$8 million) in interest per year on each billion zlotys borrowed. Today, it is more like 90 billion zlotys.

Poland's sovereign bonds have not been valued so low for 20 years. The yield spike is even worse than in the UK, where a massive selloff in late Sep-

tember helped bring down the prime minister.

"There is a frantic search for the level at which investors will be interested in Polish securities," according to a tweet from economists from the state-owned Bank Pekao.

Bond-market worries come on the back of losses for Polish stocks, with Warsaw's WIG20 index down 38% this year. The zloty has also weakened 4% against the euro and 17% to the dollar recently.

The bond selloff was due to the surprise central bank decision

to keep interest rates unchanged despite rising inflation. Central bank chief Adam Glapiński has said he supports government spending initiatives.

This, combined with Fed policy - which is slowly raising interest rates in the US - is proving expensive for Polish taxpayers. The financial markets estimate interest rates in the US in May 2023 may rise to 5%.

US bonds are thus cheaper and investors prefer to invest in high-yield US securities with lower investment risk.

Poland is not alone. The yield on Romanian securities increased by 0.5 percentage points, Czech securities by 1.5 percentage points and Hungarian securities by 2 percentage points in the last month. Hungarians are struggling with a currency crisis and recently ordered an emergency rate hike.

Even German bunds, which a few years ago investors bought despite zero or sometimes negative interest rates, now offer the highest yield in a decade.

If rates in the USA rise to 5% and the MPC does not raise rates further (Glapiński has recently even been talking about

reductions), then in six months the difference in rates between Poland and the US will be 1.75 percentage points. For the zloty, this could be dangerous, observers warn.

The government has planned the budget deficit for next year at 65 billion zlotys, while the Civil Development Forum calculates that the real hole in the finances of the state and local governments will amount to as much as 200 billion zlotys.

Therefore, it may turn out that the lending needs planned for next year will be much more than 270 billion zlotys.

The rise in borrowing costs is "very concerning for me," Polish Premier Mateusz Morawiecki told daily Dziennik Gazeta Prawna in an interview. Morawiecki said he will run "responsible" fiscal policies and doesn't plan to resort to non-standard measures to curb market volatility.

Poland's debt-to-GDP ratio of 50% is comparatively low, according to S&P Global Ratings.

Bank of America forecast in a note that Poland's general government deficit could increase to 7% of GDP, instead of the 4.5% projected in the latest plan. The EU suggested last week that Poland may lose out on as much as 75 billion euros in funds on top of the 35 billion euros in post-pandemic aid, which has already been stopped.



Bond-market worries come on the back of losses for Polish stocks, with Warsaw's WIG20 index down 38% this year.

The zloty has also weakened 4% against the euro and 17% to the dollar recently.

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POLANDWeekly

Invest in Poland

CLIMATE TECHNOLOGY INVESTMENT IN CEE ON THE UP

Investments in climate technologies in CEE grew from \$10.6 million in 2013 to \$398 million in 2020 and \$502 million in the first half of 2021 alone, according to the PwC Net Zero Future50 report, developed in cooperation with Wolves Summit. \$1.75 billion was invested in climate technologies in CEE between 2013 and the first half of 2021.

"We have even greater motivation to work towards the goals set by the European Green Deal: reducing CO₂ emissions by at least 55% by 2030 and achieving climate neutrality by 2050," says Agnieszka Gajewska, ESG leader at PwC CEE.

"Net-zero liabilities and the need for independence and energy security go beyond the scope of the business as usual approach. One of the most exciting ways to make progress is to increase the impact of climate technology solutions and match investor finance with climate entrepreneurs," Gajewska adds.

Start-ups from Estonia and Lithuania accounted for 83% of total investments in climate technologies in the region. Poland obtained only 4.65%.

The growth is mainly driven by mega-transactions (worth over \$100 million) in sectors such as mobility and transportation, and industry, manufacturing, and resource management.



Mobile start-ups have attracted the most funds for climate technologies in CEE – 54.4% of the total last year.

The Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) region accounts for 3.73% of all greenhouse gas emissions, but attracts only 0.79% of global investment in climate technologies. However, that is changing.



Mobile start-ups have attracted the most funds for climate technologies in CEE – 54.4% of the total last year.

During the same period, start-ups from the energy sector attracted only 1.29% of total climate finance in CEE.

"Although Polish start-ups have attracted only 4.65% of total climate tech investment in Central and Eastern Europe over the past eight years, our analysis suggests there is plenty of growth potential ahead for the development of its climate tech ecosystem. Poland offers a strong network of investors with capital ready to deploy. For instance, 3 out of the 5 most active VC firms in CEE are based

in Poland and Polish VCs have conducted the greatest number of deals (39), with Estonia (28) as its closest follower. And of the 50 innovative climate tech start-ups profiled in our recent report, 14 are based in Poland – the highest number of any country in the region," – says José Miguel Salazar Hernández, ESG Hub Manager at PwC CEE.

Investments in climate technologies in CEE are concentrated in the mobility and transport sector (59.8%) and in start-ups from Estonia and Lithuania (74.8%). Tallinn (Estonia), Vilnius (Lithuania) and Sveta Nedelja (Croatia) are the three most active investment centres in the field of climate technologies.



Start-ups should consider implementing a methodology to assess their climate impact at an early stage to strengthen their value

At the same time, in the period from 2013 to the first half of 2021, start-ups in CEE from the food, agriculture and land use sectors attracted only 2.26%

of total funding, and those from the energy sector only 1.29%. Only 20% of start-ups have obtained Funding from Series A/B. The remaining 80% are either initiated or operate with seed funds or grants. 40% of Future50 start-ups declare that they have limited knowledge about the emission reduction potential of their technology.

"Start-ups should consider implementing a methodology to assess their climate impact at an early stage to strengthen their value – investors are increasingly expecting such information. Therefore, if we want to secure future funding and stakeholder support, we should not overlook this area," says José Miguel Salazar Hernández.



Agata Rzędowska
journalist

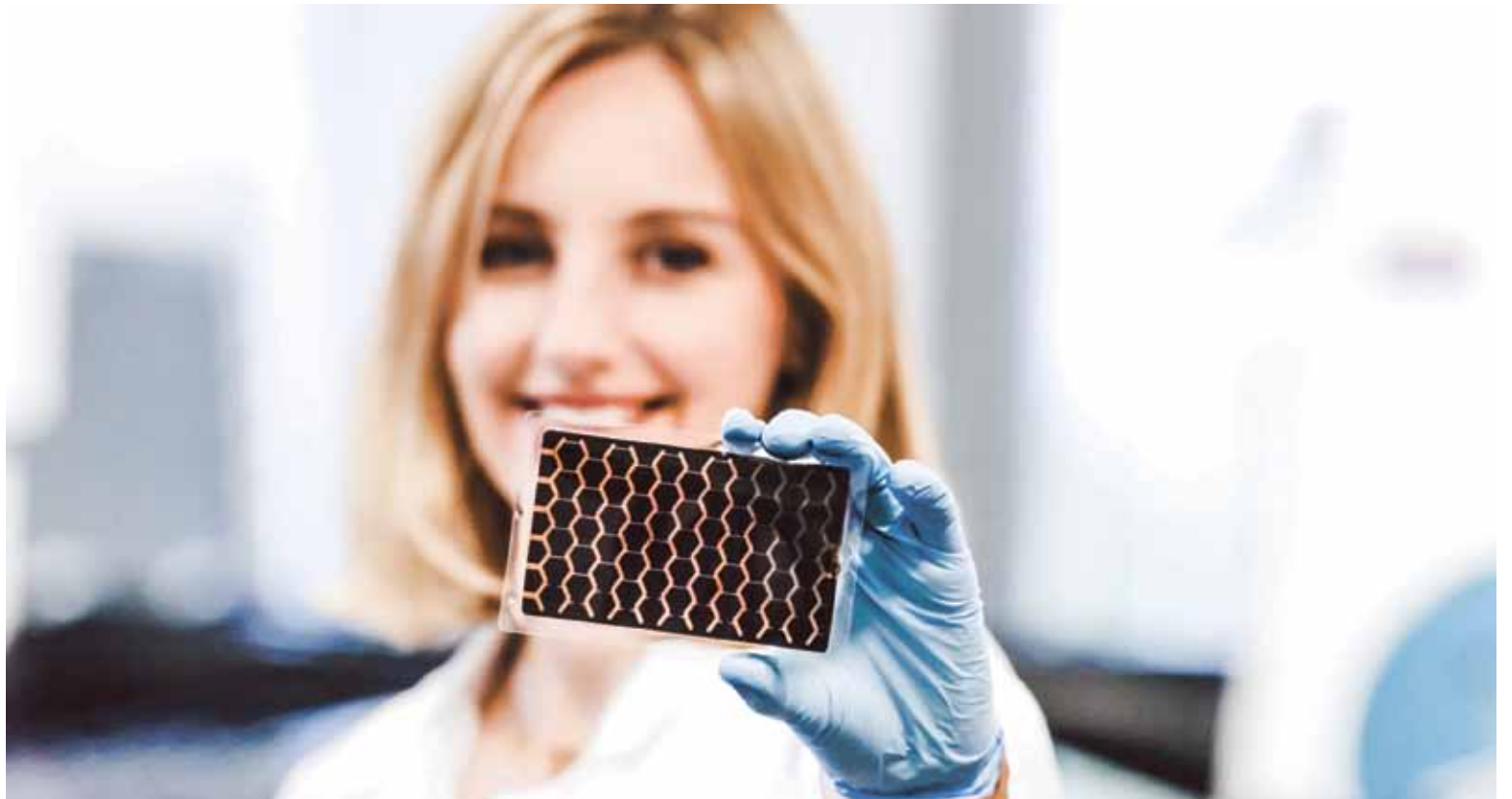
Sometimes they are small, sometimes big, but they all want the best for our planet. It is still quite an unusual approach in business, but luckily there are more and more greentechs, i.e. companies operating for climate reasons.

Interestingly, not only small technology companies - startups - are setting out to change the world. Often interesting projects are developed by social enterprises that create jobs, shorten supply chains, and close raw materials in a closed loop. Our country, economy and planet need greentechs. These companies are changing the world. They have a real positive impact on the environment and help to reduce CO₂ emissions. The creators of greentech feel responsible for our planet and are looking for business opportunities using science and knowledge-based technologies to solve the biggest challenges related to environmental protection. Their companies are sustainable in three different respects: environmental, social and financial. Green finance, food, energy, transport, behavior, IT, waste and much more - their essence is environmental protection. Importantly, their business models must be transparent and free of greenwashing. Their actions must result in specific savings for the climate and nature protection. These processes should be demonstrably measurable and based on scientific evidence.

Poland Weekly tries to show the best ESG practices, tell stories of real, rebellious green companies. We meet people who are deeply involved and focused on green technologies. A few



Poland Weekly tries to show the best ESG practices, tell stories of real, rebellious green companies. We meet people who are deeply involved and focused on green technologies.



Olga Malinkiewicz holding a perovskite solar module

photo credit: Saule Technologies

FROM SMALL ACORNS...

**Will greentechs save the world?
They will definitely make Poland greener.**

months ago I wrote about food companies offering advanced plant products. We showed business opportunities related to e-mobility, including charging infrastructure, renewable energy, energy storage and fleet management.

We would like to show you more of these success stories. Companies and people at the forefront of the green revolution.

They can be big, like Northvolt, producing sustainable energy packages and energy storage solutions, and developing a large factory in Poland. Saule Technologies, founded by Olga Malinkiewicz with perovskite technology. For startups like It's a Bean and MakeGrowLab with ingenious concepts to solve key food and waste problems.

When I started my research, I found dozens of fantastic companies that are actually changing the world for the better. How do they do it? I will use examples. First, transport, or rather micromobility. A few years ago, at a meeting at the Warsaw University of Technology, I met two brothers who wanted to produce exclusive electric bikes, modeled on a historical model of a combustion motorcycle. They wanted not only the vehicle itself - the premium class - but also to build a whole small ecosystem around its production, using the knowledge, experience of craftsmen and materials available locally -

in Buk, near Poznań - this is how Kosynier was created. It is simply the implementation of some of the sustainable development goals. A business activity aimed at improving air quality, contributing to a change in transport habits, creating local jobs. On the other hand, the Mierz Wysocko association, which I have been watching for a long time, does not produce, but repairs. It runs an Open Bicycle Workshop where it takes in bikes for repair, maintains them, resells them, but also teaches people how to repair their two wheelers on their own. Instead of throwing it away - give it back or repair it. It all started with the activation of children from one of Warsaw's districts. Today, the organization explicitly writes that it is focused on eco-friendly activities, reduces the amount of waste, and contributes to the promotion of the most ecological way of getting around - by bike.

Other industries? Textiles - a great example here is the company called "Ubrania do oddania" (clothes to give away), which collects used clothes, segregates them, sells the best-quality ones, and gives away the rest - non-wearable textiles - as the basis for the production of alternative fuel - this is how Synthetics end. In turn, cotton can be replaced with cleaning cloths. The Pajak company - a family brand offering jackets, sleeping bags, tourist backpacks, renowned also outside

the country - says that respect for nature is in its DNA. It develops organically and has built itself up thanks to controlled supply chains, ensuring product servicing - mainly based on the possibility of repairing tourist clothing and equipment, reducing the weight of produced jackets and sleeping bags, reducing the amount of materials and energy used. In this case, I would not avoid comparisons with the internationally recognized Patagonia brand - environmentally oriented in its activities.

Of course, when looking for greentechs, you cannot ignore foodtechs - contributing to sustainable consumption, reducing food waste and using local products. These include KuMin. Sys, an IT startup focused on reducing food waste in hotels, school and kindergarten canteens. This idea is so popular that the company has received support for its development from, among others, the Carrefour Foundation. In turn, PROTEINrise startup food-tech specializing in innovative food production technology with the use of alternative sources of protein raised PLN 4 million this year in its seed financing round. This will allow it to refine technological processes and prepare for the production of vegetable ice cream, sauces, mayonnaise and other products in which vegetable proteins will replace animal ones.

Other industries? We have Ekoenergetyka producing charging stations for various types of electric vehicles. The company is committed to accelerating the move away from fossil fuels in transport. Saule Technologies



PROTEINrise startup food-tech specializing in innovative food production technology with the use of alternative sources of protein raised PLN 4 million this year in its seed financing round.

prints perovskite photovoltaic panels - it wants to close its products in a closed circuit. A cheap way of producing energy from the sun will be useful both for industry and individual consumers. On the other hand, mPower Green Tech boasts of developing an innovative process for converting contaminated process gases from the thermal conversion of biomass into pure green synthesis gas. Thanks to the SynGen reactor from mPower Green Tech, it will be possible to produce green hydrogen - and this is needed by industry, energy, transport and heating.

Greentechs is being watched by the largest consulting companies - such as PwC, which prepared the Net Zero Future50 report (more about that can be found in this issue of Poland Weekly).

We can find other greentechs in the space, agricultural, construction, energy and many other sectors. Regardless of whether you are an e-bike manufacturer, fintech, medtech - or maybe you operate in another sector, but for business and for the good of the planet, contact us. We are looking for Polish Greentechs.



photo credit: Vestas

DENMARK INVESTS IN POLAND

The Danish company Vestas will build a new factory in Szczecin. It will produce parts for the largest wind turbines on the market. Components of 76 turbines with a capacity of 15 MW each will be used in Baltic Power. It is a joint project of Orlen and Canadian Northland Power regarding the construction of a wind farm in the Baltic Sea.

“Poland already has a strong supply chain for offshore and onshore wind. Especially in the north of the country

where coastal areas which had strong shipbuilding and other maritime industries now have jobs and growth from making

foundations, blades and other equipment for wind energy,” - wrote on its website WindEurope, an association of wind industry that actively promotes wind power in Europe and worldwide.

Vestas Wind Systems announced that they will build a new nacelle factory that will create up to 700 direct jobs in Poland. The Polish utility and wind farm developer Orlen will in parallel build an offshore wind installation port nearby in Swinoujscie. Both investments will serve the

”

The head of the Danish company added that the planned factory of nacelles for wind turbines, located near Szczecin, will be able to produce about 400 turbines per year.

1.2 GW Baltic Power offshore wind project in the Baltic Sea. Vestas will deliver, install, and commission 76 wind turbines for the project, and support the foundation designing.

- Vestas wants to have a significant share in the supply of turbines for offshore wind energy in the Baltic Sea, we want to be a leader in this market, just like we are a leader in the segment turbines - said Nils de Baar, Vestas CEO for Northern and Central Europe.

The head of the Danish company added that the planned factory of nacelles for wind turbines, located near Szczecin, will be able to produce about 400 turbines per year. The production will be intended for both the Polish and global markets. The plant will employ up to 700 people.

Recently, PKN Orlen has signed a contract with the Szczecin and Świnoujście Seaports Authority for a 30-year lease of 20 ha of land for an installation terminal in Świnoujście. There will be components for the construction of wind installations, including turbines manufactured by Vestas. Turbine towers will also be installed in Świnoujście.

According to PKN Orlen, the installation terminal in Świnoujście - the first such investment in Poland - will start work in 2025. The Vestas turbine factory in Szczecin will be completed in 2024. Both investments are related to the Baltic Power offshore wind farm.

The largest solar power plant in Central Eastern Europe

First stage of the Zwartowo Solar Park with a capacity of 204 MWp completed.

The inauguration of Zwartowo solar park in Poland took place on 27th September in the presence of the local authorities of the region and a large number of guests. During the event, the investors expressed their satisfaction at the successful park's first stage construction completion consisting of a capacity of 204 MWp.

The investors of SPV Stigma Sp z o.o., Joachim Goldbeck, President of GOLDBECK SOLAR Group, and Sebastian Jabłoński of Respect Energy, have made the realization of this large investment possible. They have promised to continue with the expansion of the solar plant, which is planned to add another 86 MWp. With that, a total of 290 MWp is expected to be

completed by 2023. The investors also announced a possible expansion of the project up to 350 MWp.

Joachim Goldbeck has announced the realization of a project to improve biodiversity on the site. “Supporting biodiversity together with the generation of clean energy is the best combination to support the environment.” Zwartowo project's success has set the bar high, competing not only as a sustainable energy plant but as being biodiverse as well.

Zwartowo is of great importance for Central and Eastern Europe. For Poland in particular, the solar park makes an important contribution to achieving its own climate pro-



photo credit: Goldbeck Solar

tection goals and energy independence. More than 90,470 households can be supplied with green energy and CO2 emissions can be reduced by

about five million tonnes during the project period. In addition to the capital provided by Joachim Goldbeck and Respect Energy, the GOLD-

BECK SOLAR Group was able to achieve successful financing with the EBRD as well as the two largest Polish banks, PKO BP and Bank Pekao.

LEGAL CORNER

REGULATIONS ON ENERGY EXPENSES

Enterprises should be soon entitled to pay no more than PLN 785/MWh for energy in 2023.



Aleksandra Maria Jach
legal advisor
Counsel, Real Estate
Wolf Theiss

Within a couple of days, micro, small and medium size enterprises will be finally able to budget their 2023 energy expenses. Based on the EU Regulation of 6 October 2022 (2022/1854), Member States are permitted to implement measures to artificially freeze prices for the delivery of electric energy to qualified entities. Poland has taken advantage of this opportunity and the Polish Parliament is proceeding with a relevant bill, based on which the energy prices in 2023 will be at a fixed level for certain entities.

The price limit applicable to eligible enterprises is still subject to confirmation. Pursuant to the bill adopted and sent by

the Sejm to the Senate, some enterprises will be subject to a limit of PLN 785/MWh net of VAT, whereas the Senate has proposed an amendment to the bill according to which the limit would amount to PLN 600/MWh gross. The eligible entities will be the micro, small and medium enterprises ("SMEs"). The legal definition for SMEs is provided in the Act on Economic Freedom – basically an SME is an enterprise which at the end of one of the most recent financial years, meets jointly the following criteria: (a) it had the average yearly employment rate of less than 250 employees and (b) it achieved a yearly net sales turnover (generated from the sale of goods, products and services and financial operations) not exceeding EUR 50 million, or their total assets in the balance sheet did not exceed the equivalent of EUR 43 million.

As energy operators do not have information on whether a given applicant meets the SME criteria, the enterprises will have to declare it to the energy operator by 30 November 2022. The form of the statement will be defined in a regulation of the Minister of Climate and Natural Environment, a draft of which is already attached to the bill's explanatory memorandum. It is a pretty straightforward, three-page document and its purpose is to provide enterprise identification data, serial numbers of the electricity meters and details of the agreement concluded with the energy operator. Additionally, the draft declaration states that the enterprise will need to specify the assumed portion of the consumed energy which will be subject to the maximum price. Consequently, it is assumed that not all consumed

energy may always be subject to the price limit. It will be possible to submit the declaration to the operator on paper or electronically. One should note that the declaration has to be attached with a statement confirming that the individual that signed the declaration understands that making a false declaration is subject to criminal prosecution.

Eligible enterprises will be entitled to the discounted price only to the extent consumed for carrying out its "primary activity" (Polish: "na potrzeby podstawowej działalności"). The bill does not define what is understood under this term. It seems it could be used as a way for the operator to question whether all energy consumed by the applicant is used for "primary activity". One could note that the original wording of the bill (as proposed in the draft of 14 October 2022) referred to the "consumption for the purposes of the business activity". Such a reference was the subject of an auto-correction procedure 4 days later. The explanatory memorandum to the bill specifies that the aim of

the bill is to encourage reduction in energy consumption. It may raise doubts whether consuming electricity to throw a Christmas party for employees or to illuminate a warehouse building or a shopping mall falls within the scope of "primary activity". However, it seems it may be very difficult to technically prove how much energy has been used for "non-primary activity" and is therefore not subject to maximum prices.

The discounted prices will be applicable to the settlement for the period from 1 December 2022 to 31 December 2023. Energy operators will attach special summa-

ries to their invoices presenting the impact of the bill on the payment settlement. In order to encourage enterprises to implement the necessary measures to limit energy consumption, the bill provides that the market prices applicable in 2024 will be subject to a maximum 10 per cent discount (in reference to the amounts settled in 2023) if the energy consumption in 2023 has not exceeded 90 per cent of the average yearly energy consumption between 1 January 2018 and 31 December 2021.

On a final note, the energy operators' losses resulting from the application of discounted prices will be compensated to them. The financial proceeds will be collected in a special fund from the obligatory fees paid by certain energy producers (in particular those who generate wind or solar energy).

Following the adoption of the bill with amendments by the Senate on 27 October 2022, it will be now subject to a final review and adoption by the Sejm. The date of the voting has not been set yet.



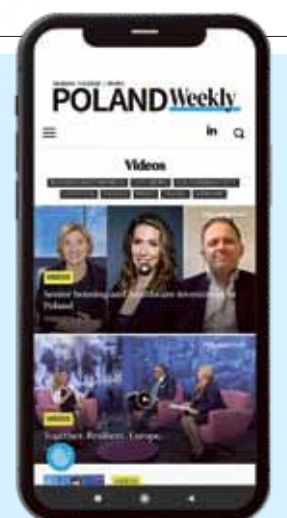
The discounted prices will be applicable to the settlement for the period from 1 December 2022 to 31 December 2023.



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One should note that the declaration has to be attached with a statement confirming that the individual that signed the declaration understands that making a false declaration is subject to criminal prosecution.

Andrea Bandirali
CEO of ItalSTARTUP

“INTERSTELLAR OVERDRIVES” AT MADE IN WROCLAW

“Everyone today is a unique entrepreneur of themselves.” These words were spoken by Paweł Stefański (the CEO of Balluff Sp. zoo) during the panel about “Human 4.0” held at the “Made in Wrocław 2022” conference.

“MiW” is a multi-themed conference with the aim of showing the world how fast this Polish city is growing. The sixth edition showed us many interconnections, interesting panels and international partners, a sort of Interstellar overdrive on the Odra River, thanks to cooperation between technology universities, startup ecosystems and investors based in Wrocław. But what struck my curiosity most was the (in)visible Fil Rouge that connects all the activities of this day: talking about a transformation in the interconnections between every issue of our society.



photo credit: Made in Wrocław/Tomasz Holod

”

What does international cooperation mean today? Is an expat or a digital nomad an integral part of the local society in which she mostly lives, or is she just an element of cultural exchange, a sort of involuntary ambassador, or just a guest?

”

This Civic Interactivity must be learned and then taught. The task of institutions, at national and local and citizen levels, is to create ecosystems in which one can learn to be socially interconnected individuals.

People become citizens only if they know their role in an organized society, as a worker becomes part of a team if she recognizes herself in the company's values. If she offers her time for money back, she'll never be a part of anything. In a world where more and more people live and pay taxes (i.e. participate in some social activities) in a different place than where they are supposed

to work, the risk is we lose the idea of the important social aspect of our life. What does international cooperation mean today? Is an expat or a digital nomad an integral part of the local society in which she mostly lives, or is she just an element of cultural exchange, a sort of involuntary ambassador, or just a guest? What should we think then of the many Ukrainians who live in

Poland now? Will they stay? Are they temporary guests or part of a long-term project? It is up to us to offer one more chance to grow our city, together with local institutions and build them a good ecosystem for long-term cooperation. If the economic interconnectedness of a society ends up changing shape and becoming completely polycentric over time, then it is difficult to find

the same mental mechanisms even in civil society. Polycentrism remains a positive value only if it is governed and educated. If one's career or job becomes the only element on which our being citizens and therefore members of a community is based, it becomes very difficult to build something important and lasting. But if, on the other hand, civil and social existence also come into play at the same time, in a context of collaboration in a broad sense, infinite possibilities for development are created. In fact, just as using new technologies to go into Space must serve to improve the use of space on earth, knowing how to enhance one's individual abilities must also benefit society as a whole.

Any working team can acquire important elements, making them grow both individually and as a team spirit, but then if each of the components considers themselves a "Myself Inc." and constantly returns back to the market, without even considering itself part of something bigger, it always ends up starting from scratch.

This Civic Interactivity must be learned and then taught. The task of institutions, at national and local and citizen levels, is to create ecosystems in which one can learn to be socially interconnected individuals.

All these themes were ideally connected during this edition of the MiW. Due to its size, the energies present in the area and the ability to make them emerge and enhance them, Wrocław can be a laboratory and a hub for innovation in human relations 4.0.



photo credit: Made in Wrocław/Tomasz Holod

DREAMERS WITH THEIR FEET ON THE GROUND

The UN Day 2022 Gala, organized by the UN Global Compact Network Poland, took place on October 24 in Warsaw.

October 24 - United Nations Day - was created to commemorate the establishment of the UN Charter on October 24, 1945.

This year's meeting was attended by representatives of the UN Global Compact Network Poland, business partners of the organization, representatives of government administration and non-governmental organizations.

"The UN Day Gala is a unique event during which we meet to talk about programs implemented in the UN Global Compact Network Poland, summarize the past year and thank our partners for their joint activities. This year, however, was com-

pletely different than we would have expected. The outbreak of the war in Ukraine on February 24 changed everything. With all the horror taking place just next door, this situation shows how much good and empathy there is in us, in people. The scale and pace of providing help touch the heart and prove that by working together we can solve many problems," said Kamil Wyszowski,

”

The UNGC currently has over **10,000** members from all over the world.



photo credit: UN Global Compact Network Poland



Executive Director of UN Global Compact Network Poland.

The UN Global Compact is the largest sustainable business initiative in the world. Since its establishment in 2000 by then UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, it has been working for the environment, human rights and anti-corruption.

The UNGC currently has over 10,000 members from all over the world. Through cooperation with governments, international organizations, companies and institutions, it carries out a number of ambitious activities, acting as a catalyst for global changes.

The Global Compact Network Poland is the secretariat of Polish UNGC members and an accelerator of local programs and activities. It carries out its activities in four areas: an Anti-Corruption Program, Business & Human Rights, Climate Positive and United Business for Ukraine, which arose from the unexpected needs arising from the situation.

"We, as an organization, did not have any humanitarian aid powers. However, when the war broke out in Ukraine, we were asked to organize help for the attacked inhabitants of Ukraine, for the refugees. We managed a lot and still do, thanks to cooperation with business partners focused on providing long-term assistance," Wyszowski said.

Companies involved in the implementation of the goals of the organization under the above-mentioned programs were present.

"The Sustainable Development Goals will not be implemented without the involvement of busi-

ness. This is why the UN Global Compact was founded 22 years ago. Today, the UN Secretary General sets a great task for us all to build a mass and global business movement around the UN Global Compact, so that the SDG, the Paris Agreements or the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are respected, implemented and promoted by every company," Wyszowski added.

During the event, statuettes for Architect of Sustainable Development 2022 were presented in the UN GCNP's program areas. Szymon Jadczyk, a journalist from Wirtualna Polska, was awarded for his fight against corruption. For supporting people in the homelessness crisis, Adriana Porowska received a distinction. She said that if she were to write a book, it would not be about helping, but about the indifference of today's world. "Indifference can do more harm than open aversion," she said.

Another statuette - for the Architect of Sustainable Development - went to Alina Czyżewska, a representative of the watchdog, Polska Civic Network. Also an actress and civic activist, Czyżewska drew attention to the role of education in shaping civic attitudes in adulthood. In her speech, she said that if they did not sensitize young citizens in schools, where they spend 12 years of their lives, to the issues of civil rights violations, it would be difficult to expect them to see abuse and react to it in adulthood.

A statuette was also awarded to Michał Kurtyka, former Secretary of State in the Ministry of Energy and the Ministry of the Environment, later the Climate Minister; best known for his ability to build consensus, which is so much needed to face the climate challenges.



WORDS THAT MATTER

Celebration of World Values Day in Poland.

On World Values Day, many employees from the modern business services sector and representatives of city authorities took to the streets in several cities of Poland to show their support for shared values. ABSL has been pointing out for years that building an innovative, competitive, and attractive economy for investors requires respect for diversity in many aspects, including age, gender, experience, and cultural capital. The modern business services sector in Poland employs more than 40,300 people and is one of the most diverse in terms of employees. For example, foreigners are employed by 93% of business service centers operating in Poland. In addition, the sector employs representatives from five generations, and the share of women in the total workforce is 53%. The ability to consciously manage diversity, an inclusive corporate culture, and workplaces which have been created to respect individual differences, are essential for maintaining a competitive advantage in the international market and attracting foreign investors. "Issues of diversity and inclusion play an important role in our sector and its development, especially in the context of talent acquisition," says Janusz Dziurzynski, President of ABSL, General Manager BAT Digital Business Solutions Poland notes that "However, it is worth remembering that when implementing global diversity, inclusion, and equality policies, it is important to consider diversity in a broad context, including the social dimension, which takes into account a

wide range of experiences – including background, where one grew up, and access to education. This requires business to be thoughtful and attentive," Dziurzynski said.

The growing importance of multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is a characteristic feature of the business services sector in Poland. Foreign workers account for nearly 14% of all employees. They come from 50 countries and provide services in a total of 36 languages, with an average of seven languages being used per center. The age structure is also an important factor in building diversity. The largest group (46%) is represented by people aged 27-34. The sector is also diverse in terms of gender. More than half of all employees are women. In the case of managerial positions at the team leader level, the share of women is 46%, and in the case of senior management, it is 39%. These levels are much higher than in other areas of the Polish economy and have remained stable over the past three years.

Communication as a key value driver

With diversity in mind, ABSL's Diversity and Inclusion Declaration recognizes the nurturing of respectful, inclusive language that does not discriminate against anyone, as one of the key aspects of an inclusive organizational culture. Employers and organizations affiliated with the Association of Business Service Leaders declare that in all their activities they are guided by the principle of equal treatment in the work-

place, regardless of age, creed, disability, ethnic origin race, gender, nationality, religion, political views, sexual orientation, gender identity, form of employment or any other con-

ditions potentially vulnerable to exclusive behavior.

Professor Adam Bodnar, who took part in a debate on inclusive language organized as part of World Values Day, commented: "Heinrich Boell said that language can be a beacon of freedom, but it can also become a very negative expression of humanity. This is why it is so

important to take care of the language we use every day – so that it does not exclude, respects differences and is the glue that binds communities together."

Diversity that builds business

Data from the ABSL report shows that nearly 80% of companies include diversity and inclusivity in their business strategies. At the same time, ABSL's analysis shows that the quality of life – both the well-being of employees and the environment – plays an increasing role in investment acquisition. The attractiveness and image of cities must translate into the ability to attract employees from the country and around the world. In Warsaw, those celebrating World Values Day were joined by Karolina Zdrodowska, the Mayor of Warsaw's representative for Equal Treatment.

"Warsaw wants to be a city where every person is provided with good living conditions, feels at home, free and safe. Diversity is a valuable resource that brings real benefits to cities and their residents. Thanks to this, we can build a strong urban community, which is open for all," Zdrodowska said.



IT'S ALL ABOUT PEOPLE

How can drinking coffee actually save the world?



Waldemar Olbryk
Dominik Goss
Co-founders of Coffideas

Over a cup of coffee maybe we will (not) save the world, but we want to make time spent with someone you rather not meet daily valuable a great experience. We want to make connections between business, culture, sport, education and merge different ideas over a cup of coffee. Thanks to this combination and an amazing drink, it might be possible to transfer knowledge and skills between various aspects of our life, inspire each other, and... act. Regardless of the nature of the business you are in, the majority of offices are equipped with coffee machines now, or just have a simple coffee corner.

Do try and you will be surprised how much you will get after 15 minutes of talking over coffee.

We launched the Coffideas concept to facilitate coffee talks and make people smile. We believe that being disturbed by others' perspectives provides us with a great opportunity to learn. It's completely up to us how much we choose to be affected and how much we learn. We're all the witness to a world which gradually interconnects, both in our private and professional lives. It's all about opportunities and the choices we make.



We want to make connections between business, culture, sport, education and merge different ideas over a cup of coffee. Thanks to this combination and an amazing drink, it might be possible to transfer knowledge and skills between various aspects of our life.



SHARING IS CARING

CELEBRATE SOMEONE'S
SUCCESS

LISTEN, SHARE,
REPHRASE, CREATE

HELPING IS LEARNING

SAY 'YES, AND'
INSTEAD 'YES, BUT'

IT IS OK NOT TO KNOW,
IT IS NOT OK NOT TO ASK

By exploiting this phenomena, openly and courageously, engaging with our contacts, we can synthesize multiple disciplines and enjoying the process as well. This is about a way to

enlarge our world and create a richer ecosystem for ourselves. Furthermore, we must be aware that sometimes a chance meeting which starts with no specific aim can lead to creating something tangible.

We strongly believe that all of the above helps us to enjoy what we do while keeping a good balance between anxiety and boredom which in turn, provides us with a flow.

We launched the Coffideas project after observations made during our course of work for international companies operating in Poland. Irrespective of the roots of the company (English, French, Swedish or Dutch), we strengthened our belief in the concept that it is all about people. For all our working life, we have been involved in the Business to Business environment. Our main reflection is that business relations management is evolving (or has it always been such...?) From B2B (Business-to-Business) to P2P (People-to-People).

Even though we observe the disruptive technologies like artificial intelligence, IoT among others, hopefully the "people-2people" concept will remain as a fundamental idea while making the business based on relations and focus on user's needs. Same applies to digital transfor-

mation which at the end of the day needs to address the behavioral change both inside the companies as well as where we interact with clients and users.

With Coffideas you can invest your 15 minutes so that you can build turbo version relationships,

enjoy the success of others. The Coffideas is a chance to practice your skills of conversation, listening, continuous learning and also to develop a network with passionate people.

The best way to find out is to give it a try.
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POLANDWeekly Real Estate



Getting the city's vibe in Warsaw

Ghelamco has announced a new development in the business heart of Warsaw. The Vibe will be the fifth project by the Belgian developer here, and the first ever office building in Poland to have its own audiosphere, giving it a unique and peculiar character, also resonating

in the interiors. Its author is the renowned Polish composer Wojciech Urbański. "We love to surprise with new and fresh ideas on the real estate market. Our new Vibe project in Warsaw's city center is exceptional - it is the first office building in Poland with its own

musical identity! Sound will be an important element for marketing communication and in the building afterwards. It was composed specially for #VIBE, reflecting the big-city nature of the project and the innovativeness and creativeness of people for whom it was designed," said

Jeroen van der Toolen, Managing Director CEE at Ghelamco. The first stage of Vibe - a building at the intersection of To-

warowa and Kolejowa streets - will be put into use in Q1 2024 and will offer 15,000 sq m of lease area.



Silver Andersia - the tallest office building in Poznań

The Silver Andersia office building is another stage of the 25-year-long investment, i.e. an office, hotel and retail complex located at Plac Andersa in Poznań. The building under construction, which is to become a business showcase of Poznań, will be 116 meters high at its highest point and almost 40 thousand square meters of usable space spread over 25 floors. The construction of the office building, designed by the Poznań architectural studio of Ewa and Stanisław Sipiński, is to be completed in mid-2025. The investor of the project is Andersia Retail Sp. z o.o. - a joint venture between Von der Heyden Group and the City of Poznań, the ge-

neral contractor of the project is PORR S.A., and the commercialization of the office building will be dealt with, among other companies CBRE.

"Silver Andersia will change the image of Poznań, becoming one of the architectural showpieces of the capital of Greater Poland. - The building under construction is to be the tallest building in Poznań and, together with the entire architectural team of Plac Andersa, will constitute the highest accent of the commercial and spatial centre of the city, thanks to which a harmonized centre-forming complex will be created, coexisting with the Old Brewery and Novotel Hotel,"- said Prof. Sipińska.

COMPLEXITIES OF THE OFFICE MARKET

Sylwia Ziemacka talked to Robert Pastuszka, Maks Sobczak and Przemek Urbański from the newly created office department at Avison Young.

How would you describe the office market in Poland today?

Robert: The market is in quite an interesting moment. Over the past two years, we have seen the changes caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, and this has largely influenced how the office market looks today. We had to adapt quickly to the new normality and new working models. Since about the middle of last year, we have seen that the market situation has calmed down a lot and the market has reacted to the new needs in a very positive way. Companies had clearly defined needs, therefore, from summer 2021 to winter 2022, we saw quite dynamic increases on the market. After this the war in Ukraine disturbed the functioning of the market again. Changes in the economy which occurred will shape the office market in the coming months. Very high inflation impacts the budgeting of future contracts. We are in an uncertain situation when it comes to utility costs and this is another factor that influences profitability of running a business.

Another issue concerns operating costs. So far, we have been used to the fact that, as in the Warsaw market, depending on the location of the building and its standard, these costs ranged from PLN 17 to PLN 25. Today, we hear from landlords, who estimate the costs for next year, that they will be at the level of PLN 30 and even higher. So we're talking about increases of 50% or more over what we have today. These are big differences that will shock the market somewhat.

Another thing is that we see a large supply gap between 2023



Maks Sobczak, Przemek Urbański, Marta Sypiańska, Robert Pastuszka

and 2024. The recent period of shocks has reduced the investment pipeline. The investment process in many cases takes between 18 and 30 months. There are also no plots of land, and the administrative process is very lengthy. All this means that less new office space will be available in the coming years. Let us add that the demand that appeared in the previous year absorbed the available space at the beginning of this year. We can already see that demand is starting to exceed supply, and this, of course, also affects rental expectations, i.e. the increase in these rental expectations on the part of landlords.

I understand that we are talking about space leased by tenants - employers. And

this is related to the real use of these office spaces by employees. The data show large differences between the expectations of employers and employees regarding working in the office.

Przemek: At this time, most tenants know what they need and what system they want to work in. Of course, there are situations where lease agreements have been signed and now the offices are empty, because the company did not estimate its needs well. But there are also firms who accept this status, because they keep profitability and need to secure desks if employees come to the office. But in general – tenants learned and estimated their needs and know now, what type and size of office they need.

The rising costs of utilities also apply to apartments where some employees do their work. Does this appear as an argument, whether it is on the side of employers or employees in the context of remote or office work?

Maks: We recently had this discussion with one of the tenants. Today it is difficult to calculate. If someone works at home all day, power consumption might actually be higher. It is hard to translate it into specific amounts or even an order of magnitude. Some employees will simply bear these costs, some will expect reimbursement from the employer. Or maybe others will say that it is more profitable for them to work from an office. It's hard to predict today.

On the other hand, the employer will also feel the increased costs and will start to wonder how to deal with it. We forecast that the first and second quarters will be the most critical periods on the market, because then the settlements will appear. So, first, there will be a calculation of operating costs for next year, which everyone is still estimating, and there will be an indexation of the rent. Here, the projected level may even reach 9%. With contracts in euro, we also have exchange rate issues. Until now, the average exchange rate was at the level of PLN 4.3, in the pandemic PLN 4.4 - PLN 4.5 did not surprise anyone. But now we have PLN 4.8 - 4.9.

What do you, as a company, want to contribute to sha-

ping the office market in the coming months?

Maks: The role of market analysis will definitely increase. Not so long ago, market analysis was easier, because there were a lot of new projects and there was just a lot to choose from. Now we have a limited number of new projects, which means that tenants will also take into account existing buildings and those being modernized. Here, our know-how and knowledge about who wants to reduce their surface area, who wants to relocate, who is thinking about enlarging it, will be very important. We already have to take actions, especially with large tenants, several thousand meters each, who plan their processes two - two and a half years before the end of the lease. It used to be enough to look at new developments. Now, we have to look ahead and reserve space in existing buildings, so that we can predict what may change in the expiring lease agreements in a year or two. Companies are likely to partially reduce the leased space, because they already know how to work in a hybrid model.

Robert: And when it comes to our strengths and also differentiators, I cannot forget about mentioning how experienced we are in cooperating with public institutions. These are challenging clients, due to all the procedures and their own specifics, but I believe that many years of our experience in this field enabled us to understand their needs very well and offer comprehensive advisory on their long-term goals.

Avison Young is an international company. I am curious how Poland is perceived within your group today in terms of the attractiveness of the office market?

Robert: Looking at the entire region of Central and Eastern Europe, Poland as a market is very strong when it comes to the office market. Therefore, looking at the global development of Avison Young, the creation of the office department was important to our clients. Our goal is to provide the highest quality services in each market segment. We cooperate closely with our strong office departments in the CEE region, e.g. in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and the Czech Republic but also in Germany and UK. In Poland, the Warsaw market alone is significantly over 6 million square meters, which is a large and attractive market. And we will take an active part in shaping it.

Office sector. Warsaw comes out of the regional markets' shadow

Office sector in Poland continuously whets investors' appetite. However, according to Avison Young, major institutional investors have narrowed their investment criteria as a direct result of the current cost of debt and the focus on ESG. The growth in construction costs over the past years accompanied by continuous rental growth offer landlords' of existing assets a huge competitive advantage and improved returns over a new-build project when setting rental

rates and leasing strategies. With €1.77 billion, office sector remains the largest investment volume maker, featuring 41% of the total Q1-Q3 2022 Polish investment market. However, the distance to the industrial sector shrunk from 20% in H1 2022 to only 5% in Q1-Q3 2022 period. Among 21 office transactions recorded in Q1-Q3 2022 period, 15 regarded regional office markets. Nevertheless, two most impressive deals took place in Warsaw. H1 2022 was dominated by the office

acquisitions on the regional markets, which amounted for 80% of number of deals signed and shared the same investment volume as transacted in Warsaw, because of the extraordinary acquisition of The Warsaw HUB. Q3 2022 tipped the scales slightly in favour of the capital city. The 4th biggest office transaction in Poland, namely the purchase of Generation Park Y by Hansainvest, brought Warsaw ahead, with 55% share in office investment volume in Q1-Q3 2022 period.

SOMETHING FOR PET LOVERS

A Polish start-up is building the Pethomer community. It is just kicking off to raise a million zloty (250 thousand USD) to develop the region's most advanced pet care platform.

The pet products and services market is growing like never before. Its current value in Europe is estimated at over EUR 51 billion, with an annual growth rate of over 5%. It is estimated that the petsitting market itself is growing at a rate exceeding 11%.

A strong upward trend came to us from across the ocean. The two most popular platforms offering pet sitter services in the United States already have over 900,000 caregivers. Last year, the American start-up Rover.com had IPO valued at \$ 1.35 billion.

No business of this type operates on a similar scale in Poland and the entire region of Central and Eastern Europe. Pethomer wants to change this by launching its service in European Union countries.

Today, the community initiated by Michał Pawlik consists of over 560 pet sitters and dog walkers in 17 Polish cities and over two hundred thousand zlotys in completed orders. In August 2022 alone, the pethomer.com website had over 16,000 unique visitors, which means an increase of 15 percent MoM. The increase in the GMV, the total value of services sold, grew at 32% monthly as of August 2022.

Pethomer - the one who truly loves pets

Pethomer was created out of pet love. It offers a wide range of services provided by proven pet sitters and dog walkers.

The founder of the start-up is Michał Pawlik. Once a manager in the financial industry, today a shareholder and board member of the Zooland Polska chain of stores and an investor in the real estate industry. The author of the book "Endorfinowy Granat", a memoir of a six-month trip through Southeast Asia. As he says, he has "two children" - a two-and-a-half-year-old son Bruno and ... a black cat named Django.

- Our services are a response to the challenges of everyday life. When dog and cat parents need to leave for a couple of days or stay longer at work, our Pethomers, i.e. pet sitters and dog walkers verified by us, come in. We want our

users to be sure that their loved ones are in good hands when the human parent is far away - says Michał Pawlik, the originator and founder of Pethomer.

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The pet products and services market is growing like never before. Its current value in Europe is estimated at over **EUR 51 billion**, with an annual growth rate of over **5%**. It is estimated that the petsitting market itself is growing at a rate exceeding **11%**.



Pethomer team

Only some pets tolerate traveling by car or plane well. Pethomer offers the option of dog boarding at a pet sitter's apartment. This kind of home care gives loved ones a sense of secu-

rity and comfort. The services provided by the platform guarantee an individual approach to its most important users and devote the pet sitter's full attention to them. They are, therefore, more trusted than classic pet hotel deals.

In addition to home care, Pethomer also offers the option of daycare. Dog walks or drop-in visits while the absence of their human parents is a reasonable solution for those who need to travel away for a short time or spend more time at work. To save the pet from the stress related to changing homes, the caregiver will visit the cat or dog and, if needed, take care of his diet or give him medications.

Growth

Pethomer's quantitative target for the coming months is a four to five x increase in the user base and GMV compared to 2021. What is the company's business model? The payments for the services are processed through the Pethomer.com platform. The company charges a commission of 10-20 percent for each transaction.

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Dog walks or drop-in visits while the absence of their human parents is a reasonable solution for those who need to travel away for a short time or spend more time at work. To save the pet from the stress related to changing homes, the caregiver will visit the cat or dog and, if needed, take care of his diet.

The start-up is looking for investors and is raising a million zlotys (\$ 250K) with the forc.ee equity crowdfunding platform, to improve the platform, optimize the transaction process, launch a mobile application, strengthen the market leader's position and expand the existing team.

- Demand for Pethomer's services seems immune to macroeconomic factors. The platform has encapsulated in a user-friendly interface everything that has been realized only in traditional models on the Polish market. After all, providing pet care was only possible through word of mouth, support groups in social-media channels or pet hotels (which do not always have the best reputation), points out Piotr Luszczyk vice president of Forc.ee, an investment platform supporting the Pethomer start-up.



CHARITY CORNER

SUPPORTING ADULT CHILDREN (25 +)
WITH DISABILITIES

Katarzyna Braiter
Editor in Chief

The Foundation of the Association "Szlakiem Tęczy" (Rainbow Trail) was established by parents of adult children (25 +), with various disabilities who are no longer covered by educational support systems. There are no places for them in day care homes (there are no such places), there are also no suitable jobs for people with disabilities, even for many of the so-called higher functioning. There is also little or no training or assisted housing for these people. In a word, there are no places for the adult children with disabilities where they can train and learn to live independently - and after all, there will soon come a moment when their parents

will lack the health and strength to care for their children. Therefore, parents of adult children with disabilities, worried about the future of their children, founded the "Szlakiem Tęczy" Association for Children and People with Disabilities. The main goal of the foundation is to provide equal social opportunities for children and people with disabilities, and to respect their human and civil rights. This is done through detailed activities that activate people with disabilities and their families in social life by organizing various types of events, classes, workshops, and integration meetings. The group organizes assistance for its disabled charges and their family members in the areas of reimbursement of treatment costs and rehabilitation. Through advocacy for the charges and their families, the association promotes respect for people with disabilities in society and counteracts social exclusion of this group.

The concept includes:

1. Day Care Home for Adults with Disabilities - where parents can leave them

for eight hours a day under professional care (so-called "school of life" plus rehabilitation)

2. 24/7 Nursing Home for Adults with Disabilities - people whose parents are no longer able to look after their disabled children or are no longer alive.
3. Establishing a House for the Occupational Activity Center for Disabled People, those that are "higher functioning," in order to provide them with professional work and revalidation activities, and thus raising funds for partial maintenance of our home.
4. The Foundation proposes that this home should be a development center with the possibility of expansion and widening of its functions. One of the very important problems to be solved is the creation of respite places for people with disabilities at the 24/7 Nursing Home to allow their parents and caregivers to leave their children there during leave or hospital treatment.
5. The next stage of extending the functions of the Nursing Home will be the creation of training flats, and ultimately for higher functioning people, assisted flats.

Thanks to the cooperation of the foundation with the Pruszków District local government, funds were obtained from the Ministry of the Family and in 2022 the construction of a LIVING CARE CENTER starts (there will be permanent residences for eight people with disabilities and daily residences for 22).



The representatives of the Foundation realizes that the biggest problem will be to maintain this HOME subsequently, hence the idea of registering a foundation that is legally better suited to managing such a place and raising funds for its operation. They anticipate that the costs of running the home will be covered from:

1. State targeted subsidies,
2. Special-purpose subsidies from local governments,
3. Funds obtained from targeted projects (obtained by the foundation)
4. Rent for house residents,
5. The gainful activity of the foundation - Department

of Vocational Activity of People with Disabilities,

The purpose of creating the above-mentioned facility is to ensure a safe and dignified life for adults with disabilities after our death. "We do not want to burden the problem of caring for a disabled brother or sister of their "healthy" siblings, when we are no longer there. Each of the parents has already paid the price for caring for their disabled child and does not want anyone else to pay it," - say parents from Rainbow Trail. Interested persons are invited to constructive cooperation for this noble purpose.



POLISH ACCENTS AT THE ARCHITECTURE MASTERPRIZE

Architecture MasterPrize (AMP) is a global architecture competition based in Los Angeles designed to promote, appreciate and display high-quality architectural designs around the world. This year recognitions went to 3 designers and studios from Poland.

BXB Studio

BXB Studio is an interdisciplinary design studio that attempts to creatively challenge issues in the fields of urbanism, architecture, art, design, graphics and publishing. In design work, the studio draws inspiration from Polish history and tradition, re-thinking traditional motifs and adapting them to contemporary design. In recent projects, the studio has dwelled on folk notions such as the Zakopane Style or sacral architecture from timber. In creative practice, the BXB studio places great emphasis on the relationship between man and nature. The first Architecture MasterPrize is the Company of the Year, the second the Project of the Year awarded for implementation of the Polish Farmhouse. The Małopolska Chata Podcieniowa received a special distinction.

Both in the Company of the Year and Project of the Year categories, the jury awarded BXB the "Winner" status as the only Polish studio awarded in the "Small Firm of the Year Award in Residential Architecture" category and in the "Residential Architecture - Single Family" category.



"At BXB studio we design buildings that are both modern and traditional. This combination allows us to create interesting forms, an example of which is Polska Zagroda, which is a cre-



The Polish Farmhouse / photo credit: Rafał Barnaś



The Małopolska Chata Podcieniowa

ative transformation of a typical rural farm into a modern residential residence, where in the place of five farm buildings intended for demolition, we designed five interpenetrating barns that create an interesting, extremely dynamic space. Małopolska Chata Podcieniowa

draws inspiration from Polish wooden arcaded architecture. It is a design house, but at the same time durable and timeless because it is rooted in tradition. We believe at the BXB studio that thanks to this it is something more than just a modern building," said Bogusław Barnaś.



Cavatina Hall

Another Polish project appreciated in the Architecture MasterPrize is Cavatina Hall, which received the prestigious Architecture MasterPrize in the "Commercial Architecture" category.

Cavatina Hall located in Bielsko-Biala is a concert hall and

recording studio that combines commercial functions with the promotion of art in a unique and modern office building. No matter where you sit, Cavatina Hall concert hall was designed so that any type of music can perfectly resound throughout its interior. Its acoustics allow

the full range of colors to come through during symphonic concerts, intimate encounters with classical music and pop stars alike. Behind the exceptional sound quality is the state-of-the-art L-ISA (L-Acoustics) sound system that enhances your enjoyment of every note.



Cavatina Hall

THE QUAVER

Another recognition went to Adela Moss from Akademia Sztuk Pięknych in Gdańsk. What happens when Architecture meets motion

and movement? The Quaver is a design experiment reflecting on this notion inspired by the works of Theo Jansen. Units made of thin wooden

logs, moved by the energy and movement of sea-waves create a moving casing of Orłowskie Pier in Gdynia. It is a temporary construction, and a low carbon footprint is the project's second objective - it is also built from recyclable materials



Internal view front of peer



(eg. Wood Plastic Recycled Composite). The goal was to create an experience of being inside a living, ever-changing machine, propelled by nature, redefining architecture.

The winners of this year's Architecture MasterPrize will be honored at a gala ceremony on November 5 at the Guggenheim Museum building in Bilbao (Spain).

A DAY IN KRAKÓW'S DELIGHTFUL TOWN SQUARE



Adam Larson

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Writer, teacher, and traveler from Kenosha, Wisconsin, USA. He has written for NBC News, Philadelphia Weekly, WyoFile, and several other outlets, and has appeared as a guest on CNBC. He has traveled throughout the United States, Europe, and Asia, and his favorite soup is żurek.

Any town in Poland worth its salt has a rynek, or town square, and no town in Poland has a rynek quite like Kraków's. The largest market square in Europe, Kraków's rynek is the center of a UNESCO World Heritage Site that has survived more than half a millennium of plagues, uprisings, and world wars. While Kraków has many things to do, it's possible to spend your entire day just exploring the rynek and its attractions.

An attack by invading Tatars in the 13th century leveled much of the city, and from the ruins residents rebuilt the old town in its current design, with a large town square in the middle of a grid of streets, all surrounded by defenses that were eventually replaced by a wooded park. Today, the Tatar assault is commemorated 24 times a day from one of the towers of St. Mary's Basilica, located at the east corner of the square. Every hour on



Many of the paintings are historical, with enormous depictions of historic Polish victories to promote national pride

Just a short walk from Kraków's modern train station is the historic heart of the city. The largest market square in Europe, Kraków's main square has survived from the 13th century and offers more than enough history, shopping and dining to fill a lovely day.



the hour, a city fireman plays the hejnał, a bugle call that suddenly stops partway through, allegedly in remembrance of a watchman who spotted advancing Tatars and was killed by an arrow while raising the alarm. Visitors that head inside St. Mary's Basilica will be impressed by a starry blue ceiling and an enormous altarpiece crafted by Veit Stoss that took 12 years to finish.

The rynek is always busy, with busking dancers, tourists posing for Instagram, kids feeding pigeons, and vendors selling flowers. The main focal point is the Sukiennice, or Cloth Hall, which stretches from one end of the rynek to the other. Built atop the ruins of medieval market buildings, visitors to this beautiful

Renaissance structure can see wooden stalls selling amber jewelry and kitschy T-shirts, all beneath the coats of arms of many historic Polish cities. Visitors in the know, however, can get souvenirs here and pay a visit to museums both above and below the shopping arcade (and, if needed, a convenient pay toilet at the north end of the Sukiennice). Look on the east side of the Sukiennice to ascend the stairs to the 19th Century Polish Art Gallery, a wonderful art museum that gives visitors a view of Polish art from a challenging time when Poles lacked an independent state. In a century where Poles rose up against foreign occupiers several times only to be defeated on the battle-

led by three foreign powers. The gallery complements these massive historical paintings with serene Impressionist paintings from the same time period that feel a world apart.

Those with an interest in medieval history will want to head to the entrance of the Rynek Underground Museum, located at the northeast corner of the Sukiennice. The museum was built around the remains of medieval roads and buildings that were long-buried underneath the modern rynek, and uses high-tech exhibits to talk about low-tech artifacts.

A variety of food options mean visitors never have to leave the rynek to refuel. For a quick snack, small carts offer filling obwarzanki bagels, which have been sold in Kraków for centuries. Restaurants with cuisines from around the world line the



"The Prussian Homage" by Jan Matejko at National Museum Sukiennice.



field, Polish artists commented on the Polish struggle for independence and tried out the new art styles emerging throughout Europe. Many of the paintings are historical, with enormous depictions of historic Polish victories to promote national pride, while others use allegories to comment on the challenges facing Poles when they were ru-

edge of the square, and their outdoor seating works as a perfect people-watching perch. If you'd prefer a view from above the action, there is a seasonal café next to the Sukiennice's art museum with a terrace. After a meal, grab a cup of Polish hot chocolate (which tastes like a liquified chocolate bar) and go for a stroll.



Marta Kalinowska
Hartwig

STORE CONCEPT IN POLISH

Each of us lives in some kind of bubble. In an environment built in part from crumbled cookies, in part out of our activity on SoMe channels and largely due to our habits. This bubble sometimes hurts, often limits, but it is familiar - known and predictable, it creates a sense of security.

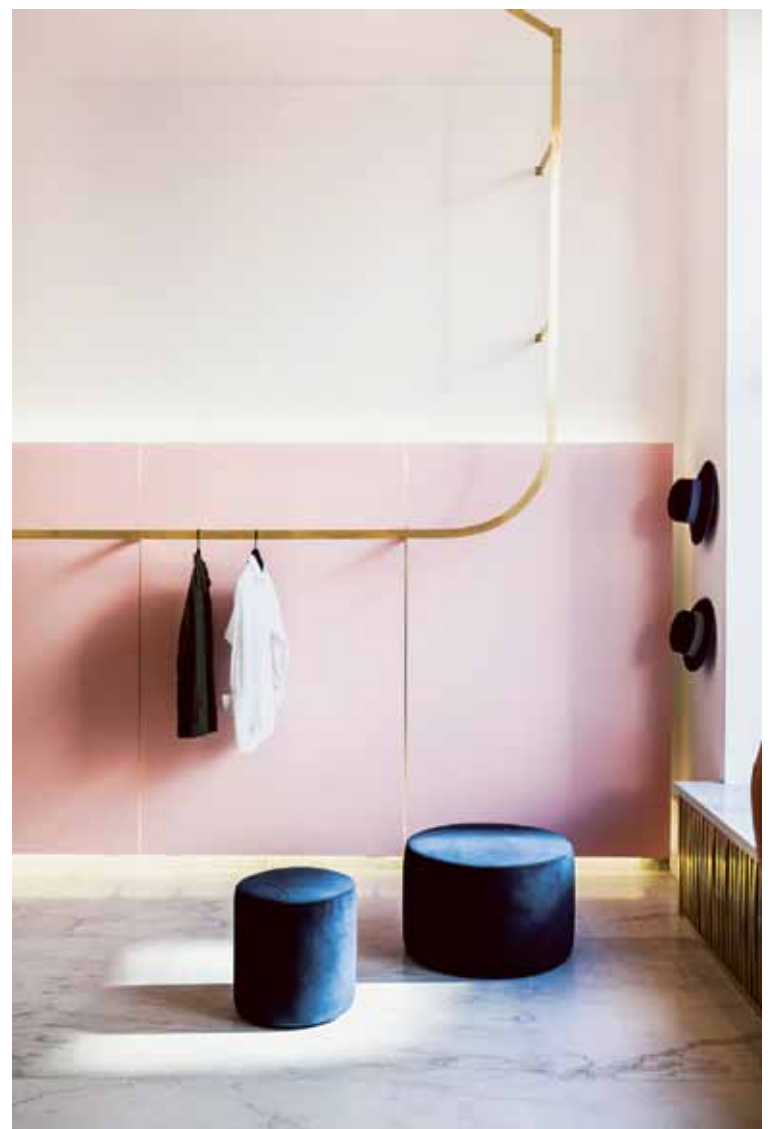
Today, you can look at the world through the prism of brands in a similar way. Increasingly, they decide to go far beyond the product, offering their customers much more. Today, brands bu-

ild worlds around them. A favorite sports brand not only sells comfortable sneakers, but also organizes marathons, publishes sports photography albums, cares for our nutrition, shows us exemplary attitudes by investing in ambassadors. Great, but what if we want something more?

The solution is the concept store idea. By definition, it is a place that combines tasteful aesthetics, fashion, design and even social attitudes. A place that is not only an inspiration,

but also a solution to our shopping needs. What to wear, how to decorate the house, to look after our beauty with cosmetics - in short, how to be in trends, and even - how to set them!

The owners and authors of such places never stop trying to find new, interesting and quality products. Let's take a look at those that build their concepts based on Polish brands. And let's take a look at Polish brands that sell in concept stores all over the world.



Galilu

The most famous Polish concept store dedicated to fragrances. The owners have been importing niche perfumes and cosmetics from all over the world for 20 years. Galilu is a cult place that has recently been promoting a Polish brand producing candles - Camdunia. Its story is a concept in itself. This is a variation on one of the most famous elements of the Polish culinary tradition - a rose bud colliding with the smell of a big city - Warsaw. Each candle introduces an atmosphere of warmth and tradition into the home, it is also a memory from the capital of Poland that can be sent out into the world.

Lui Store

Each item was personally selected by the owner, who gained her experience in prestigious fashion houses - Dior in Paris and Marchesa in New York. After years of importing brands from around the world, Luiza Kubis finally founded her own - Monday Artwork. Clothes combining classics with fashion nonchalance are the perfect base for building your own style. Especially in business!

Roma Concept Store

Roma Concept Store is a multibrand based 100% on Polish brands. Apart from clothes and accessories, it also sells great jewelry. The Mokave brand is a collection built on the premise that everything fits together. We can mix gold with silver, and minimalist forms with more boho design. It is jewelry for experimenting and fun - especially since the prices are very affordable.



Kyosk

Kyosk is a concept store promoting collections designed in Poland by Berenika Czarnota. The brand offers soft, fluffy sweaters - all made entirely by hand by Polish craftsmen. Some of the models take days to complete. This makes the brand's products unique and very special, and their high quality guarantees that they will serve for years.



bébé concept

Its founders guarantee that from the sea of options and offers they personally chose only those that they can honestly recommend. Home things, clothes for mothers and babies - all of them are products of the highest quality, natural and certified. The founders, Marta i Olga, sell only products manufactured in the spirit of sustainable development, combining functionality and beauty. Things for years that will successfully find a "second life" in the next owners or future generations.





Katarzyna Braiter
Editor in Chief

Liana, we've known each other for over a dozen years, but you and your family have been in Poland for over twenty years. What winds blew you to us?

We have been in Poland for 32 years and the wind that blew us here was the wind of ordinary economic emigration. After graduation, both my husband and I got jobs where the salary was \$2 an hour and you didn't know what to do with the money. There was also a civil war in Georgia. It was then that our first-generation emigration adventures began.

Were your beginnings in Poland difficult? How long did it take you to settle in here? Is Poland your permanent home?

The beginnings were very difficult, we went through fire and water. The first generation of emigration is often a person coming to a new country with one bag. There is no financial support in the new country, no family, and they have to cope on their own. You take any job just to earn a piece of bread. Our whole family stayed in Georgia and over 32 years we have been helping them all the time. They also have no-one but us. We feel this responsibility for all of them and our family here in Poland all the time. And this responsibility mobilizes us a lot. At the beginning, we worked in trade, selling cosmetics and sweets abroad, but when problems began at the border, we decided to change jobs. Due to our Georgian hospitality, having guests at home all the time, a friend asked us why we had not opened a Georgian restaurant and



We have been in Poland for 32 years and the wind that blew us here was the wind of ordinary economic emigration. After graduation, both my husband and I got jobs where the salary was \$2 an hour and you didn't know what to do with the money.



Q&A WITH A FRIEND

Liana Gamcemlidze is a pianist and conductor by education. For 15 years she has been running two Georgian restaurants, Gaumarjos, in Warsaw. A colorful soul that few will fail to notice.

this is how our adventure in the restaurant business began. The beginnings were very difficult. When did I feel that Poland was my place? Just 22 years ago when we built a house. It is said that "my home is my castle" and at that moment I felt that I was at home. And I knew that now I do not have to be afraid of any work, having a roof over my head for bread and butter, I will definitely earn money.

If anyone told me now that I had to move out of Poland, I wouldn't cope. This is my home.

I love Georgian cuisine and fortunately I can enjoy it in Poland. And it's thanks to you. You run two Georgian restaurants in Warsaw. You were probably one of the first people who shared Georgian flavors with Warsaw residents. Why the catering sector? Although I know that both your husband and you did completely different things before coming to Poland.

Georgian hospitality is known all over the world, so here our house was always full of guests and I always cooked for these guests and apparently cooked tasty food. And as the situation also changed, it became less easy to trade, so we tried something else - the restaurant business.

I know that you took part in Magda Gessler's program,



I like a lot of things in Polish cuisine. I love good tartare, I love duck, I love sour rye soup, tripe. I love to eat a lot of Polish, well-prepared things.

in which she assessed your cuisine. I know it turned out phenomenally. Were you a little afraid?

I was afraid of one thing. I am a rather strong person, and what I saw in Magda's programs is that she is also very determined. I knew my food was good. Not that I am so great, but I prepared everything from the best products and I knew it was always appreciated by my husband, who really has a knowledge of what is good and is always very critical when something is not good. So if something suits him, it means it's good. I was also afraid that Magda would stick to something for no reason, but it was not like that. There might be little things that didn't suit her, but not everything can be perfect. She also pointed out to me that I should prepare the dishes in the original version, i.e. with the same

amount of spices as a Georgian would eat. And I was a bit afraid to use too many spices because I thought it would be too spicy for Poles, and fortunately she convinced me to try it. And from that moment on, I focused on the authenticity of the cuisine. To this day, I have a lot of guests and it shows that Magda was right. Of course, this cuisine can be authentic, because the ladies who cook it came straight from Georgia.

Liana, I will not reveal the secret if I say that you are a musician from the conservatory. You play the piano beautifully. Please tell us about it.

In Georgia, I graduated from two faculties at the conservatory: conducting and piano. But this work, unfortunately, was poorly paid in a very unfair way. It turned out that here, too, my work as a musician would not give me a dignified life. If I started working as a music teacher, I would not be able to support my family in any way. I cannot say that I regret that I am not practicing my learned profession because I have the opportunity to play for my guests. I also have a piano at home and I often play when I come home.

Liana, you are a beautiful colorful bird that cannot be passed by indifferently. On the one hand, because you are a very good person and you help those who need it, but also because you are always in a unique style. I love going out in public places with you, because all eyes are always on you. How did you completely change your image?

My transformation took place six years ago after bariatric surgery I underwent for health purposes and I had a stomach resection, so my goal in life, i.e. cooking and trying dishes,

would no longer be possible. I got hysterical when I realized I had had it all taken away from me and thought I had to replace it with something else. I am a non-drinker and non-smoker and my only pleasure was good food. While lying in the operating room, looking at a magazine, I noticed an article about Iris Apfel, an elderly lady who was then 94 years old. I saw how wonderful she looked, all colorful and with a large amount of jewelry. I just thought that maybe I would also make such joy by making myself large and colorful stylizations with jewelry. And she was just an example that age doesn't matter. So, after I was 50, I "unfastened my roller skates." And so began the adventure with colors. For me it is therapy, the only thing I miss in Poland is a lot of sun and colors. And I load myself with these colors. These are my batteries. I have neither the desire nor the time for depression, so I have to push it away with something and these colors help me with that.

And tell me in the end, what Polish dishes do you like the most?

I like a lot of things in Polish cuisine. I love good tartare, I love duck, I love sour rye soup, tripe. I love to eat a lot of Polish, well-prepared things. I have two places where I like everything: at our mutual friend Irena's and at the Fukier restaurant. There, I have the opportunity to get to know the best of Polish cuisine.

Can I ask for one more thing? You now have an artist at home, that is, your husband/turned actor.

He didn't become an actor, he was always an actor. He worked for 12 years in Georgia in the theater after graduating from the Theater Institute. He only had a technical break. He had been given small roles before and five years ago he was invited to the series *M jak Miłość*. He says he felt like in heaven taking part in this show. He likes being with people. He likes to be the center of attention.

Finally, I would like to thank you very much for inviting my humble self to this interview. And if any emigrants read this short history of my family, I would like to say that you must not put something off until tomorrow and you must not be afraid. You have to find your motivation and know that you always have to count on yourself and always move forward. I have had logs under my feet many times, but I always get up and run forward, and thanks to the hard work of the whole family, my husband and two sons, we are where we are. And I wish you all the same.

Poland through the eyes of foreigners

What was the turning point that finally made you escape the mounting political repressions?

I come from the family of repressed 'enemies of the people' and 'Polish spies' who were executed by Stalin's regime in 1937. Being a dissident is in my blood and lies at the core of who I am and what I do. Of course my art was declared 'extremist' a long time ago, but I knew I truly couldn't stay any longer the day my daughter called me and said – 'don't come back home'. They were already waiting for me... Belarusian dictatorship really is a perfect continuator of the best traditions of NKVD and KGB.

One of your art projects is actually directly related to the political prisoners in Belarus...

Yes, it's called 'Belarusian Stigmata' and it depicts faces of the Belarusian political prisoners. There are already two thousand of them in Belarusian prisons. So far, I've painted four hundred portraits. The torture of the prisoners can be compared to the torture of people imprisoned in the war. We are indeed under occupation. I've been working on this project every day for the



HOLD ON TO YOUR DEMOCRACY

Xisha is a Belarusian artist and a political refugee living in Warsaw. Graduated from The Belarusian Academy of Arts in Minsk in 1996, she's been a soldier with the art as a weapon ever since. Named 'an extremist' and systematically repressed by the dictatorship, she was granted an asylum in Poland one year ago and found herself here just months before the Russian attack on Ukraine. In the face of the new war her mission unexpectedly extended, bringing a new meaning to her life and work.



past two years. It was actually exhibited in Germany recently and now it's going to the European Parliament in Brussels. Afterwards - Prague.

Why did you choose to seek shelter in Poland?

My son was already here and for the same reasons. He had to run from repressions at his university in Belarus. He came here for the Konstanty Kalinowski Scholarship Program to continue his education.

So your beginnings here were this much easier...

Yes, but not just because of that. From the very start I only experienced understanding and empathy from the people in Poland. When we arrived in Warsaw I went to the Foreigners' Office, showed them my illustrations from the opposition books and asked for asylum for me and for my daughter. Then I went straight to the Wola Centre of Culture and got myself a job as an art teacher. I shared with them my teaching experience – back in Belarus I used to have my own studio called 'The friendship of

the deer, the hare, the dragon and the shark'. They immediately took me in - it was amazing! I am so grateful for this understanding and kindness! The people here and their openness made all the difference.

What do you do now?

After the Russian invasion on Ukraine I volunteered at the Polish-Ukraine Centre Wolska. This work is so important for me! I feel like all my creative forces now are aiming at giving

testimony to the great courage in the Ukrainians' fight for freedom. We help and support those who have fled the war in almost every aspect of life on a daily basis. For me personally there is also one more side of these meetings. Because I am Belarusian, sometimes I feel I should clarify what side I'm on. I don't perceive it as an imposition, but rather as an opportunity to show my support, empathy and admiration for the Ukrainian spirit. My country is occupied by the cannibalistic regime and my friends and neighbours are resisting destruction from the same dark force. The dialogue is necessary and it sort of became a new calling for me. Even though the tragedy of war is with us every day, I still feel inspired. And I'm learning so much - from Ukrainians: the ability to unite, from Poles – their thoroughness, bringing things to a conclusion and teamwork. We Belarusians are more individualistic.

You've been here for a year now. Do you feel connected to the place and the people here?

In many ways, yes. I work with amazing and very talented people. I've had a lot of inspiring meetings with personalities from the intellectual clubs of the 'Solidarność' movement's time, whose commitment to your country and democracy inspires me every day. My son is studying here, my daughter is in fantastic high school and I'm really happy with the educational opportunities they have. The education system is truly great in Poland – it really encourages development and supports learning process. I also have my favourite places in Warsaw. I live in the old Mokotów and I love it. Królikarnia, Dreszer Park, Royal Park Łazienki – they are full of charm all year round. And of course the riverside – I love to walk under all the bridges. There is one special place in Warsaw that carries a great significance for me and is strongly connected to my sense of duty – the Rakowiecka prison and The Museum of Cursed Soldiers and Political Prisoners of The Polish People's Republic. I live nearby so everyday I go to its yard to pray and remember the thousands of intellectuals, who were executed in 1937 in Belarus. In the place where that crime actually happened, the regime is building a restaurant right now – just to prevent us from remembering. So I found my own symbolic space to commemorate my people here in Warsaw. I think now I can say I finally feel at home in Poland. I recently adopted a dog that was saved from Ukraine and that helped me a lot. Except for the nostalgia, which is mute and beyond the mind.

So you often imagine the day you'll go back?

Back in Belarus I never thought I would ever leave my country. I have to go back and some day I will. I am hopeful and I deeply believe that there will come a moment when I will return to my homeland. I am preparing for this – for the independence, freedom and peace. On that day I will say goodbye to the streets of Warsaw and my favourite Vistula with all her bridges – all the places that gave me the shelter when I needed it the most.

And what would be your farewell message to the Polish people?

You have a true democracy here. Fought for and built by brave Polish people. Please hold on to it, nurture it and don't take it for granted. It can take decades to get, and just a moment to lose.



It's called 'Belarusian Stigmata' and it depicts faces of the Belarusian political prisoners. There are already two thousand of them in Belarusian prisons. So far, I've painted 400 portraits.

GIORGIO ARMANI

I AM WHAT I LIVE

MY WAY

THE NEW FEMININE FRAGRANCE

