

POLAND: TIGER OF EUROPE?

“10 years ago Poland spent about 0.5% of GDP on research and development. Now it is 1.4%. In turn, spending 2% of GDP would allow us to become a European Korea, a small technological center of the region and the world,” - said prof. Marcin Piątkowski in the interview with Prof. Pawel Wojciechowski. p. 3



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 €

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POLAND Weekly

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

TOP 10 FORECASTS FOR 2023

2022 is behind us. What will 2023 bring us now? Geopolitical tensions, inflation, energy crisis, supply chain disruptions, elections? Szymon Ostrowski, Managing Director, NEWPORT LOGISTICS FUND presents the top 10 trends, challenges and opportunities that lie ahead in 2023. p. 5



INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Russian propaganda and disinformation are neither new nor unique to Ukraine. Analyzing them, one can see the same narratives, messages and tactics exploited by the Russian propaganda machine in relation to Poland and Lithuania, according to a report 'Resilience to disinformation' by the Civic Resilience Initiative, Detector Media and Kosciuszko Institute. It identifies how to build resilience to Russian disinformation in Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine - the 'Lublin Triangle' countries. Jo Harper. p. 6



DIPLOMATS FOR CHARITY

SHOM, which brings together the diplomatic community of Warsaw, has held the International Charity Bazaar for the 15th time in Warsaw, with about 50 embassies and 20 foundations under the care of SHOM taking part. p. 22



CULTURAL ASSISTANT

Tôn Văn Anh is a Vietnamese sociologist and activist cooperating with multiple Polish NGOs and working as a cultural assistant in public primary school in Warsaw. She is also the co-author of the book in Polish for the Vietnamese p.23

GERMANS AND POLES: PARTNERS ON A GLOBAL STAGE

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“Some 25% of Poland's trade is with Germany. There is also a lot of investment from Germany to Poland. Companies with German capital are responsible for 400,000 direct jobs. Vice versa. Poland is also really gaining a very important position for many German purchases and for German companies. And that is happening mainly through innovation.” - Sylwia Ziemacka from Poland Weekly talked to Dr Lars Gutheil, Executive Board member at AHK. p.12





Katarzyna Braiter
Editor in Chief



What will 2023 be like? As a rule, at the beginning of the year, we sum up the previous year and make projections for the new one. However, I think I prefer to live in what will be and not make summaries of what has already passed. Last year was difficult, sad, among other things, because of the war in Ukraine. I would like to forget about it. And you? Will you remember last year with nostalgia or will you throw yourself into the whirl of what is going to happen this year? Will inflation still be a crucial issue? Will fuel prices continue to rise? Will we learn to live with the war going on next door? I guess we don't know any of these for sure. And we really have no control over what happens. However, we have, maybe not a big - but always

some - influence on what will happen around us. When it's not easy, let's try to create the world around us as we want it to be. Let's take care of the family more, let's plan trips together for the weekend to places where we will find peace or which will allow us to throw ourselves into a lot of fun. Let's take care of our friends too. Let's show them that we care about them. Let's go together to the cinema, an interesting exhibition or just for a walk. Every little gesture of kindness can also bring us a lot of joy. Let's look for a new job that will allow us to develop ourselves. Let's not stress. Let's believe in our strength and possibilities this year. Let's change what we don't like. Let's infect others with optimism. Let's just live well. This is what I wish you.

cartoon



No changes in interest rates in coming months

At its January meeting, the Monetary Policy Council held interest rates on hold, the National Bank of Poland said.

"We start the new year with no surprises. At the first two-day meeting this year, the MPC decided to keep interest rates unchanged. This scenario will probably be repeated until the second half of this year. The March inflation projection of the National Bank of Poland may cause a stir, both in the media and among analysts. After that, we will know more about the direction in which the MPC can take its decisions for the rest of the year," commented Mariusz Zielonka, an economic expert at Konfederacja Lewiatan.

The fall elections and spending to boost public sentiment will be of key importance. Therefore, we can then probably expect a symbolic cut in interest rates.

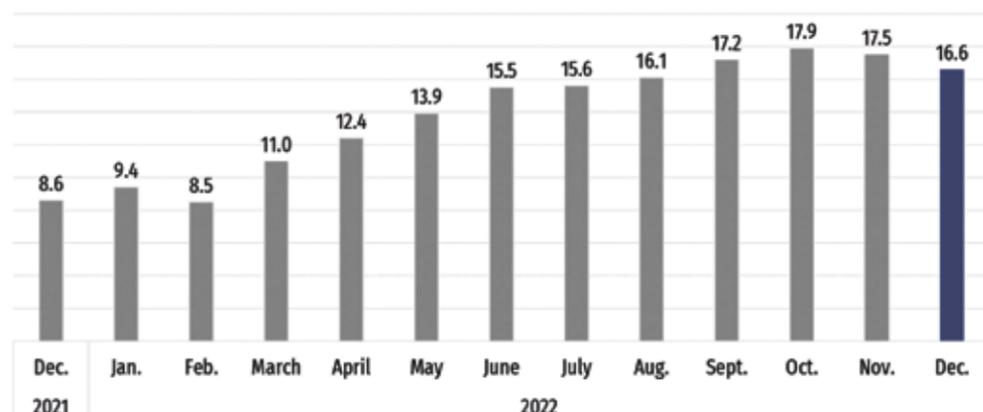
At the January conference, NBP chief, Adam Glapiński, referred to the forecasts of a possible interest rate cut. "Interest rates will be lowered as soon as possible. Whether at the end of this year, we will see. I hope so. When we are permanently in a situation where increased demand will not increase inflation and inflation will be on a downward trend for other - external - reasons, that will enable us to loosen rates and loans will become cheaper again," he added.

On January 5, the Central Statistical Office published a preliminary estimate of inflation for December 2022. Prices rose 16.6% year-on-year from 17.5% in November. On average, analysts expected a reading of 17.3%.

data point

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Price Indices of consumer goods and services (flash estimate) change in % compared with the corresponding period of the previous year



#PriceIndices

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Poland: Tiger of Europe?

Poland, in the book *Europe's Growth Champion. Insights from the Economic Rise of Poland* by prof. Marcin Piątkowski, is presented as a champion of economic growth in Europe. The author talked with Prof. Pawel Wojciechowski.

You proposed the Warsaw Consensus, as opposed to the Washington Consensus, as the factor that makes Poland a champion of economic growth in Europe. Why such a decision?

I wrote a book about Poland's economic success as a case study of a country that was economically backward for 1,000 years and suddenly, in the last 33 years, did something great. It is not only Poland that has succeeded, but also the entire region of Central and Eastern Europe. As an economist who has been working abroad for a long time, it has always annoyed me that the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the European Commission talk about the successes of countries such as Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, Chile, Botswana, and never mention Poland. And I think that the example of a country that has tripled its GDP in the last 33 years is one from which other countries can and should

draw conclusions. There are over 150 countries around the world that are either poor or are treading water, unable to catch up with rich countries. And I believe that the case study of Poland and the region is very important. It is a set of different attitudes to economic policy, differing in fundamental issues from the approach of the Asian tigers. This is one of the reasons why the Warsaw Consensus was created in response to the more well-known Washington Consensus, to show what was the specificity of Poland's and the region's success, and how other countries can be inspired by this example to change something in their own economic policy.

But the diagnosis is fundamentally different, because in the Washington Consensus we had privatization, free trade, deregulation, fiscal stability as the factors that drove economic growth. And here is classic

economic growth and credible institutions. We agree on the fact that there has been a dynamic growth, but the diagnosis is different.

The Warsaw Consensus is a decalogue of ten directions for economic policy, which partly stems from what we have already done, but also what we should continue to do. The Washington Consensus has a poor reputation in the world. It is considered - fairly or not - as a decalogue of policies that most economists associate with blind neoliberalism, which says that the role of the state must be minimized and the will of the market maximized. It is very



I think that the example of a country that has tripled its GDP in the last 33 years is one from which other countries can and should draw conclusions.

artisanal. It doesn't take into account things that are often more important, like building institutions. In fact, there are none in the Washington Consensus at all. The institutions that were the key to Poland's economic success were the ones we brought in from the West. These are the rule of law, an independent central bank, open markets, and antitrust authorities. Today, despite what has been happening in Poland for seven years, they are still holding on.

We agree here. But can we today be an example of a European tiger in terms of the rule of law for other countries?

We are an example of an economic tiger. In the past 25 years, we have been developing faster than Korea, Singapore and Taiwan. This success has happened for the first time in our thousand-year history. And I believe that attacks on the rule of law in Poland are completely unjustified, both economically and politically. I have never understood the argument that 33 years after the start of the transformation that we are still supposed to remove judges because they are still communist, even though two generations have actually passed. It's an imaginary problem. If there are problems with the rule of law in Poland, they are not related to the fact that we have these or other judges, but that the system itself is poorly organized. So from this technocratic point of view, an attack on the rule of law in Poland, I think, makes no sense at all, it is harmful to Poland.

In terms of skills and what we call innovation, we are way behind.

Yes and no. Yes, because we are still far from creating goods and services for export. And among other things, part of this consensus, and subsequent publications after this book, is that our golden age may end after 2030. Because we will have exhausted the advantages of absorbing technologies and ideas developed in the West. But if we want to have an income level close to Germany,



The upside is that 10 years ago Poland spent about 0.5% of GDP on research and development. Now it is 1.4%. In turn, spending 2% of GDP would allow us to become a European Korea, a small technological center of the region and the world.

we will have to start creating, and for that we will need innovation. The upside is that 10 years ago Poland spent about 0.5% of GDP on research and development. Now it is 1.4%. In turn, spending 2% of GDP would allow us to become a European Korea, a small technological center of the region and the world. As for education, we always complain because our universities are not Harvards and I don't think they ever will be. They are way down in the rankings. But the rankings are not necessarily reliable; they are based on research output, which is obviously important, but it does not reflect the quality of education. Because you can be an outstanding researcher and Nobel Prize winner, but not be able to pass on knowledge to students. So, according to the rankings, we do not create many new products, hence there are no Polish Nobel Prize winners. However, in terms of the quality of education, at Polish universities we provide solid knowledge at a low cost. In the United States, as you know, because you also studied, you have to spend \$ 50,000 per year to study at the undergraduate level at a university that is no better than the University of Warsaw, Kozminski or the Warsaw School of Economics.

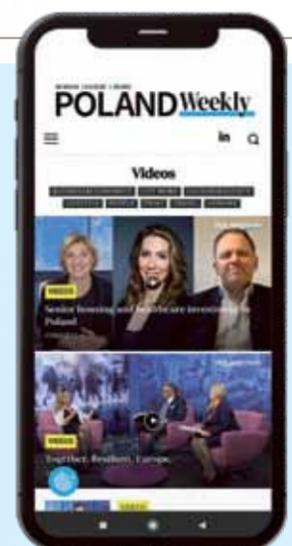
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Business, people, culture in Poland

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Poland Weekly newspaper – distributed and sold inside and outside Poland, the portal and original video programmes are aimed at keeping an international community up to date with the economic and business situation in Poland, but also introducing information about culture, society and lifestyle.





Jo Harper

Founded by Jacek Siadkowski and Daniel Di Giusto in March 2020, Tech to the Rescue (TTTR) was established as a global platform connecting NGOs and technology companies.

After the war in Ukraine started, Europe's tech community stepped up to offer support to Kyiv, leveraging know-how, expertise and resources to support people, communities and livelihoods.

Since then, key partnerships and collaborations have been developed, such as with Google.org, Google's philanthropic arm, which got involved in the form of \$500,000 in grant funding and a Google.org Fellowship. This has enabled TTTR to scale its platform and efforts globally.

In just a few days, over 540 companies from 40 countries pledged to support nonprofits helping Ukraine, and over 110 NGOs from Poland, Ukraine, Romania, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and the United States submitted projects.



Nova Ukraine, a US-based fundraising platform, has helped raise \$67 million for Ukrainian relief efforts since March 2022. Of that, \$37.5 million went on projects, and \$18 million were in-kind donations.



POLAND-BASED TECH TO THE RESCUE HELPS UKRAINIAN CHARITIES

Poland-based Tech to the Rescue has helped over 100 Ukrainian charities and NGOs with digital transformation.

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More than half of the monetary donations went to emergency first aid, hospital medicine, supplies, and medical equipment. Another 20% helped procure food and basic-needs items. The remainder funded infrastructure and supply-chain efforts, refugee evacuations, and animal welfare projects.

"The non-profit is dedicated to providing humanitarian as-

sistance to Ukraine, Kataryna Kovalenko, Nova Ukraine project manager, says.

Since the start of the war, Nova Ukraine has helped over 3 million people with thousands of volunteers, serving meals, delivering aid packages and evacuating people and animals.

TTTR matched Nova Ukraine with Automattic to help develop a new website and fundraising platform, allowing for payments via PayPal, Credit Card, Facebook and Crypto.

There are three directions of fund-raising, she adds: crowd-funding, working with commercial companies – Google, Microsoft, Facebook, Warren

Buffet – and grants from the UN among others.

Now Nova Ukraine collaborates with savED charity foundation on rebuilding destroyed schools and arranging shelters in schools and kindergartens.

216 schools in Ukraine have been completely destroyed and 391 are damaged, leaving more than 177,000 children with no access to education.

Some of the efforts included saving Ukrainian cultural heritage online, finding accommodation for 4,600 displaced Ukrainians with UASOS, or helping Nova Ukraine raise \$31 million for humanitarian aid.

Nova Ukraine is sending charging stations, power banks, generators, fuel, blankets, and other infrastructure and basic supplies necessary to provide heat and comfort to Ukrainians during this difficult winter.

Other similar projects include Vostok SOS, based in Ukraine, which has partnered with German-Swiss NGO Libereco to provide evacuation support to Ukrainians. Malteser International, a nonprofit based in Malta, has been collecting everyday supplies for Ukrainians who have been forced to flee their homes. United Help Ukraine is an US nonprofit that formed after the 2014 annexation of Crimea and is raising money to send first aid kits and other humanitarian aid to Ukraine. The fund has surpassed its goal of \$600,000. Another US nonprofit, Sunflower of Peace, is raising money to put together first aid backpacks for paramedics and doctors on the front lines.

To donate to Nova Ukraine please visit:
novaukraine.org/donate/

Polish-German satellite launched

On January 3, at 15:56, the STAR VIBE satellite was launched into orbit. The satellite is a product of cooperation between the Wrocław-based company Scanway and the German company German Orbital Systems.

"Yesterday was a good day for the Polish space sector. The Polish-German STAR VIBE mission with two of our instruments on board successfully reached Earth orbit, communicated with the ground station and confirmed, among

other things, the deployment of antennas and the start of the battery charging process. Many thanks to our German partner German Orbital Systems GmbH who prepared this mission with us! Danke!"
Jędrzej Kowalewski, CEO at

Scanway Company, wrote on his LinkedIn profile.

The launch took place on board the Falcon 9 rocket during the Transporter 6 mission, which took off from the spaceport in Florida.

This is a demonstration mission of two proprietary systems - a small Earth observation telescope called STAR and a satellite self-inspection system called VIBE.

The goal of the mission is to test the STAR telescope and VIBE technology in space conditions and raise the technology readiness level to the highest, ninth,

level. For this purpose, the impact of space conditions (a vacuum, temperature fluctuations, high radiation, microgravity)

on the telescope's components, electronics on board and the quality of the collected data will be checked.





Szymon Ostrowski
Managing Director, NEWPORT
LOGISTICS FUND

TOP 10 TRENDS, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR 2023

2022 is behind us. What will 2023 bring us now? Below is my summary and thoughts on the top 10 trends, challenges and opportunities that lie ahead in 2023.

1. WAR AND GEOPOLITICS

The war in Ukraine will end, just when exactly is not known yet. The war itself is a destabilizing element for many factors and trends, such as investments or energy supply chains. Participation in the joint post-war project

of rebuilding the devastated Ukrainian economy will be an important factor and trend supporting the development of Poland and the region. Intensifying Chinese-American rivalry is also an element that will matter in 2023.

4. ENERGY

The aforementioned war has caused an energy crisis that has not been seen in Europe for decades. In 2023, gas is unlikely to run out, but the general increase in the cost of energy and hydrocarbons will stay with us for a long time, even after the war is over. An opportunity for Poland, but also for Europe, is the acceleration of processes related to transformation and energy security as well as

energy efficiency. On the one hand, there must be a change in the energy mix by increasing production from RES and nuclear energy, and on the other hand, measures to implement energy efficiency on a large scale through a green revolution in construction and production. In this case, energy crises have a chance to strengthen actions that reduce emissions and thus be more eco-friendly.

5. SUPPLY CHAINS / NEARSHORING

recent years have been marked by disruptions in global supply chains mainly due to covid and war. Next year doesn't look like it will be any better. Covid, war and trade tensions still exist and will continue to occur. Nearshoring is a concept known about for a long time, but has recently be-

come a reality. As a result of the aforementioned disruptions in supply chains, companies are increasing their production, warehousing and service location capabilities in Europe. This is a great opportunity for Poland, as well as for the warehouse and industrial real estate market.

7. ESG

activities in the field of caring for the environment, social responsibility and corporate governance have become not only fashionable, but also profitable due to the above-mentioned energy transformations and the expectations of investors, clients and capital providers. Something that is

not ecological, and therefore not energy efficient, is expensive and therefore less valuable. ESG, which we also often forget, is one human aspect that is very important in today's era of labor shortage, because whoever is able to keep people will be able to quickly return to normal operations.

8. THE FIGHT FOR TALENT

neither covid nor the current situation have reduced the labor market, however, the coming year's economic slowdown may weaken the pressure of employees to increase salaries. The coming year will,

like the previous ones, be marked by the fight for talent in a much more difficult macroeconomic environment. Every zloty spent will be worth its weight in gold, just like every good employee.

2. INFLATION

In the coming year, inflation (probably high double digits) will not return to its previous low levels and thus the cost of capital (interest rates) will remain high. It is worth bearing in mind that

the period of cheap money (and thus of low inflation) could not last forever, and lasted over a decade anyway. Now we have to look for new areas of growth and ways to finance it.



6. E-COMMERCE

e-commerce has been the star of recent years due to covid, which has changed the way goods are sold and bought. Despite the return of customers to shopping malls, e-commerce is growing at a double-digit rate and will continue to grow strongly. The global value of this sector by the end of 2022 is expected to

increase to \$5.4 billion, and the number of parcels sent to 175 billion. In Poland, the e-commerce market is currently almost PLN 100 billion and by 2026 it is expected to have over PLN 160 billion. On one hand, this is great news for business, but also a cause for concern for logistics managers due to the lack of free warehouse space.

9. ELECTIONS

parliamentary elections await us in 2023, and local government elections in 2024, which means not only a time of promises and spending, but also competition between politicians and their parties. Election time is not about co-

operation and compromise. The Polish economy faces many challenges and there are many issues that require attention, e.g. public and local government finance, energy transformation, the KPO, health care, housing.

3. ECONOMIC GROWTH

The global struggle of central banks with even higher inflation than in 2022 will be like walking on a tightrope in the context of maintaining or stimulating economic growth, which is currently being throttled by, among other things, the energy crisis. Weakening economic growth will require companies to manage in a flexible and effective way at every level. Of course, this should always be the case, but in times of prosperity everything always goes easier. Poland has a good chance to go through another year with a low, albeit positive, growth, in part due to internal consumption (including Ukrainian citizens), as well as investments from the KPO (recovery fund), when they are unblocked. Paradoxically, many companies in Poland have also been strengthened after the last two years of the covid pandemic.

10. TECHNOLOGY

We live in an era of new technologies that are emerging or constantly improving. Artificial intelligence, cloud, robotics or machine learning help to improve efficiency as well as work safety. On the other hand, the development of technology brings threats in the form of cyberattacks. Today, cybersecurity is a key element to ensure safe use of not only the Internet, but also energy and telecommunications networks or key data for both companies and the state. It is worth mentioning that NATO has recognized cyberspace as another theater of warfare next to land, sea, air and space.



READING BETWEEN THE FRONT LINES

In the first weeks of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the Detector Media NGO identified over 30 unique pieces of disinformation targeting Ukrainians in the Ukrainian information environment every day.



Jo Harper

The report identifies several goals of Russian propaganda and disinformation in the Lublin Triangle: to undermine citizens' beliefs in future, trust within groups and between groups and discredit international cooperation.

To target citizens' beliefs, the Russian propaganda machine undermines the state's capacity to function, claiming that a "country is not a sovereign state," that its "government is unstable and incompetent" and that "the country is struggling economically," the report notes.

It explains this by saying that "Lithuania/ Poland/Ukraine is under external governance" allegedly "being used by the West/elites/world secret government" with "CSOs, independent media and their representatives being puppets of Soros/'the West.'"



Russian propaganda tries to position so-called "Russophobia" as Nazism, claiming that Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine "persecute people for their political views" and "control the information environment."

Russian propaganda also tries to persuade citizens that they have no prospects in their own countries. Russian energy blackmail in particular is being converted by Russian propaganda in claims that "the inflation and energy crises are caused by the West's misguided political approach" and that "citizens are the one paying for mistakes of the government," the report suggests.

The second goal of Russian information manipulations is to destroy intergroup and intragroup relations, the report finds.

In all three countries, they identify different communities (based on language, sexuality, religion etc.) and narratives that seek to sow distrust between them.

Russian propaganda also claims that Lublin Triangle countries "discriminate against/terrorize Russian speakers," "attack Russian culture" and "ignore the voice of those with pro-Russian views in the debate, imposing the censorship of political correctness," the report goes on.

Refugees are also being weaponized by Russian propaganda and disinformation to undermine intergroup and intragroup relations. Russia is behind such messages as "refugees are spoiled/ungrateful," "refugees are prioritized over the host country citizens/inhabitants," "refugees destroy national identity," "refugees pose an epidemic danger," "white/'European looking' refugees are prioritized over others."

For the same reasons, Russia weaponizes history to pit one community against each



Most of the efforts are targeting NATO and the EU with Russian propaganda claiming that they "are weak and about to collapse." It persistently fuels the message of "NATO/ EU membership is not beneficial for your country."

other. For instance, in Poland, it exploits the Volhynia Massacre (ethnic Poles murdered in Nazi-occupied parts of eastern Poland, now part of Ukraine, by Ukrainian nationalists). This troubled history between Poland and Ukraine has been part of anti-Ukrainian disinformation in Poland since 2014. Currently, Russian propaganda is exploiting it trying to persuade Polish society that "Ukrainian refugees do not deserve help as they allegedly support the massacre."

The third goal of Russian information manipulation and interference is undermining international cooperation and unity. Most of the efforts are targeting NATO and the EU with Russian propaganda claiming that they "are weak and about to collapse." It persistently fuels the message of "NATO/ EU membership is not beneficial for your country." Russian propaganda tries to claim that overall international organizations are powerless. For instance, it heavily promotes the narrative of "sanctions on Russia being ineffective."

Russian propaganda claims that "the West" is weak and at the same time explains its failures in Ukraine by saying that "the West is the one at war with Russia," spreading stories about "foreign mercenaries."

Russian propaganda and disinformation tries to depict "The West" as hypocritical for caring about Ukraine so much and at the same time blames it for "causing the global food crisis."

Fighting back

Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine have several things in common that have contributed largely to their resilience to malign information campaigns, the report notes. First, there is a clear understanding that Russian malign information activity threatens national security. Understanding, acknowledging and analyzing the threat worked as the first shield against Russian information manipulations and interference. Thus, mapping the sources and their connection to the Kremlin is crucial. Moreover, holding those responsible to account sends a clear signal that no one has the right to exploit the freedom of speech to incite hatred, call for violence or spread genocidal rhetoric.

On 28 July 2020, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Poland, and Lithuania, Dmytro Kuleba, Jacek Czaputowicz, and Linas Linkevičius, established the Lublin Triangle as a format, one of the goals of which was to counter the threats emanating from Russia. The tripartite format is based on the traditions and historical ties of the three countries.

The right to information is a human right

Among the challenges and topics that face international agendas in the 21st century, we can notice the following slogans: climate, equality, peace. Actions taken by governments and organizations should be intended to make the world a better and more friendly place for every human being.



Dr Katarzyna Bąkiewicz
expert in ethical and responsible communication, Business and Human Rights program, UN Global Compact Network Poland

mation is a modern currency, and its importance is growing exponentially every day. In practice, however, we can see a decreasing quality of information, an increasing pool of disinformation, manipulation or half-truths. Our information ecosystem is being shaken in its foundations, because it is increasingly difficult to find valuable content in this chaotic structure. There are also

no people or entities who feel responsible for this deepening crisis, which you have to face every day if you want to get through the flood of often mutually exclusive messages, in which it is easy to find hate speech, stereotypes or exclusionary language. After all, communication is where everything begins and ends. Language shapes reality, and with its help we can build or destroy social structures, often even entire nations, it is a tool of unification or propaganda. It is in language itself that we can find man's place in the world.

Are we worthy or are we pushed to the margins? We can choose which way we go. The power of communication lies in its

agency, which is both measurable and perceptible.

Human rights, which constantly need to be reminded about and whose ethos needs to be upheld, demand communication: responsible, factual, empathetic communication. In 2022, which was not an easy one, societies torn apart by war just beyond our eastern border and the crisis coming from the west must rediscover the values expressed in human rights. Their communication should not stop. On the contrary, it should be strengthened during this difficult time. Language devoid of violence, full of awareness, compassion and understanding for other people is a recipe for the hardships we

have to face. When public discourse is no longer based on good quality information, it does not defend the truth, it gives way to populism, extremism and evil, which begins its expansion from language to other spheres of our lives. The generally applicable narrative is not only the responsibility of politics or business, because although they largely shape social views and influence attitudes, there is still a decision as to whether we remain passive towards such messages or exit the information bubble, even if it involves risk of inconvenience, and focus on quality. The quality of public communication, and thus the level of implementation of human rights, is our common responsibility. It is a task for everyone who, day after day, makes decisions regarding communication both in the micro, interpersonal, and the macro, i.e. mass, via the media and the Internet. The way the world looks and works is the result of human activity in various areas. The fact that there are still unattended areas where there is disorder and inequality is also our responsibility. By consciously using communication, we can correct these inequalities, restore dignity to all the disadvantaged and excluded and give them their human rights. Because only the fullness of truth will give us the world we all strive to build.

Source: Report "Business and human rights - time of global change", UN Global Compact Network Poland / ungc.org.pl



Launch of the report "Business and human rights - time of global change".

In an ideal world, the rights that we possess a priori are respected and we do not have to fight for them or demand them, because they are due to us from the very fact of being human. One of the human rights is the right to information. They should be understood broadly, not only as the privilege of gaining knowledge about the world, but also through the right to independent media, the right to the truth or the right to ethical communication. The social role of information is still underestimated. It is true that there is some belief in the idea that infor-

Companies are still looking for new employees

What are the key conclusions from Employers' Plans survey, carried out by the Randstad Research Institute together with GfK?

The current economic downturn has fed into a fall in business sentiment, to a level almost as bad as during the pandemic in 2020 and rising numbers of companies plan to reduce employment in the coming months. However, more companies are still looking for new employees. These are the conclusions of the 46th edition of the Employers' Plans survey, carried out by the Randstad Research Institute together with GfK.

The majority of employers across the country (74%) plan to keep employment at the current level in the coming months. This is a record in the history of the study. An increase in employment in the new year is forecast by 16% of companies - 9 p.p. worse than in the previous edition of the survey and half lower

than in the previous year. On the other hand, more companies will reduce employment in the coming months (7%, an increase of 3 p.p. within six months).

Companies that operate in the SSC/BPO sector most often want to increase employment, 33%, as well as in industry, 21%, and construction, 20%. Due to the economic situation on the market, some industries also said they will cut jobs, which is why in this sector of the economy such plans were declared by 11% of employees, the highest among all surveyed industries.

"Employers - if they can - refrain from dismissals. Firstly, many of them have struggled with finding employees in recent years. They saw how costly it is to not fill vacancies and how long it



can take to recruit competent people. Secondly, over the last dozen or so years, Poland has gone through periods of slowdown or crises, making up for losses faster than most other developed countries. The planned



33% companies that operate in the SSC/BPO sector most often want to increase employment,

increases - on average twice as low as inflation - are a sign that instead of reducing the number of employees, employers struggling with lower levels of revenues and profits may try to limit wage increases. The decreasing number of recruitments and uncertainty may mean that such an approach can also be perceived positively by the majority of crews," says Łukasz Komuda, labor market expert from the Foundation for Social and Economic Initiatives. In the coming months, salaries in half of the companies surveyed will remain at the current level and 46% of enterprises intend to raise them (a year ago,

48% of companies had plans to raise them).

Employees in the south of Poland can count on an increase in salaries the most (51%). On the other hand, the least chance for increases appears in the northern voivodships of the country (40%). Wage increases are most often planned by companies dealing with real estate services and other enterprises (54%), companies from the transport and warehouse management sectors, and industry (51% each). The smallest chance for raises is in the SSC/BPO industry - only 41% of employees there intend to raise wages.

The reason for the increases is not always the hike in the minimum wage planned for the beginning of the year. Some 53% of companies said they currently employ people who receive the minimum wage. Although the percentage was the same a year ago, the number of enterprises in which such a group of employees constitutes less than 10% of the staff is growing (51% of all companies employing employees receiving minimum wages).



EKOENERGETYKA AND VOLVO TRUCKS JOIN FORCES

Representatives of Ekoenergetyka and Volvo Trucks gave concluded an agreement for zero-emission heavy transport and optimization of product sales. The agreement also covers promotional and educational activities through joint ventures, events and projects.

The move comes in the context of increasing challenges faced by the heavy transport sector for fleet electrification and expansion of the charging infrastructure.

“We have been successfully delivering Volvo Trucks electric trucks in Poland for several months now. In order for the development of electromobility to accelerate even more, comprehensive solutions are

needed that our customers expect, including, above all, support, advice and the ability to deliver fast chargers of the highest quality. We are very happy to cooperate with Ekoenergetyka, thanks to which we will be able to provide comprehensive transport solutions,” says Małgorzata Kulis, Managing Director of Volvo Trucks Polska.

“The automotive sector is undergoing a huge change, it will change more in the next 10 years than in the last half century. We are ready for the upcoming changes and are joining forces to

support the evolving industry. We are very happy to cooperate with Volvo Polska.” Petros Spinaris, Vice-President for Sales and Marketing of Ekoenergetyka-Polska.

Electromobility is entering areas that we do not think about on a daily basis. There is also a revolution taking place in last-mile transport, transport over medium or long distances, and even in municipal management.



The first Clean Transport Zone in Poland will be implemented in Krakow, but most local governments are already preparing for big changes.

Electric vehicles will be the future of delivery and municipal fleets. Increasingly, the customer will expect the use of electric vehicles in their fleets, among other things due to market expectations, but also due to legal regulations. The amendment to the Electromobility Act makes it easier for local governments to introduce Clean Transport Zones, where the use of internal combustion cars will be limited or prohibited. The first Clean Transport Zone in Poland will be implemented in Krakow, but most local governments are already preparing for big changes.

Since November last year, a municipal services electric vehicle has been operating on the VOLVO FE ELECTRIC chassis in Gniezno.

Ekoenergetyka-Polska provided a two-station DC charger with a power of 2x40 kW for tests, which it performed without failures to date over 60 full charging cycles.



New solar plants in Poland

Green Genius and mBank sign €46m deal to build solar plants in Poland.

Renewable energy company Green Genius and the Polish banking group, mBank, have signed an agreement worth PLN 220 m (€46.45 m) to build solar

plants with a combined capacity of 69 MW in Poland, marking Green Genius biggest deal on the Polish market to date.

“In Europe’s journey towards energy independence, cross-border cooperation is inevitable,” says Rokas Bancevičius, CFO at Green Genius. “It is an important milestone for us in Poland and we’re delighted to have this experience in cooperation with the bank.”

“The financing of green sectors and the energy transformation is one of the pillars of mBank’s strategy. By 2025, we intend to earmark as much as PLN 10 billion for the financing of RES,



electromobility and recycling. Our PLN 220 million loan for the construction of solar farms is one of the largest transactions of this type on the Polish market, which shows how determined we are to achieve green objectives.” says Bartłomiej Czuba, Deputy head of Structured and Mezzanine Finance, mBank. Green Genius announced its fourth solar portfolio in Poland last spring. The first milestone

of the portfolio – 66 MW solar plants – is already under construction. The second milestone of the current 69 MW solar plants will be financed based on the transaction with mBank. mBank has already invested over PLN 1b (€215 m) in large-scale solar projects. Green Genius is a renewable energy developer operating in eight European countries. Since 2019, Green Genius has already built three solar

PV projects in Poland with a total accumulated capacity of 128.1 MW. Along with current projects under construction, Green Genius is to implement 263 MW in Poland.

According to the Polish Investment & Trade Agency, in 2020 Poland used ~25% of its solar market potential. However, the situation in the market is rapidly changing.



Green Genius and mBank, have signed an agreement worth PLN 220 m (€46.45 m) to build solar plants with a combined capacity of 69 MW in Poland.



A NEW APPROACH TO INVESTING IN ELECTROMOBILITY

Horyzont EV with the support of Elocity presents an offer to investors who want to multiply their capital on the electromobility market.

Horyzont EV is a fairly young company on the electromobility market, but with a very interesting business model. The mechanism is simple and refers directly to the scheme of purchasing real estate for commercial purposes, which will be handled by a professional manager. The inspiration from the housing market is the result of many years of experience of the company's founders, who have several hundred completed investments throughout the country.

"The Horyzont EV offer is addressed to people who want to safely multiply capital in the form of a prospective investment and quickly enter the electromobility market," says Pawel Kuczera, President of the Management Board of Horyzont EV.

"We guarantee investors recommendations as to the optimal locations of charging stations, which remain the property of our investors. We deal with the ongoing management of

the network, so that the investor can passively reap the benefits of a given investment," says Pawel Kuczera.

Electromobility - safe income in uncertain times

All places for planned investments are examined in terms of traffic volume and marketing potential, which is especially important in the case of charging stations with advertising screens. The company offers stations with 55-inch LED screens, which give investors the opportunity to earn not only on charging, but also on digital marketing. Horyzont EV targets such locations as railway stations, large housing estates, shopping centers, transport

hubs, petrol stations and others where traffic intensity directly translates into the occupancy of individual charging points.

"Assuming that the station will be used for a minimum of 3.5

hours a day (which means that three to four cars will use it on average per day), the expected annual profit is 30-35%. And in the case of stations with advertising screens, it is even 15% more. In practice, this means that the investment will pay off within a few years, and the income will reach several dozen percent per year," Kuczera calculates.

Currently, many investors are hoping for safe profits. The co-owner of Horyzont EV argues that one of them is the electromobility market.

"Today, electromobility is a machine that has started and cannot be stopped. You can see it in the legislation, you can see it in neighboring countries - everything is moving towards zero emissions. Major car manufacturers offer electric vehicles, giants in the logistics industry are changing their fleets to electric ones. Other solutions, such as hydrogen drive, are not as accessible as electricity," says Kuczera. Elocity's cooperation with Horyzont EV is the ninth white label partnership. Such a model gives even novice players on the EV market a significant advantage at the start of their business.

"The innovative approach to the development of electromobility in Poland presented by Horyzont EV fits perfectly with our perception of this industry," says Agnieszka Nocuń, CFO Elocity.

"Once again we have a partner who receives software from us that is 100% tailored to its needs. We are sure that together with the development of the electromobility market and the needs of users, we will jointly develop our product with new functionalities for operators and users. This only confirms that the development of zero-emission transport requires a flexible and unconventional approach, which we have been using at Elocity from the very beginning," he says.



The company offers stations with 55-inch LED screens, which give investors the opportunity to earn not only on charging, but also on digital marketing.

Figene Group starts selling energy to LPP

Figene Energia has started the implementation of a long-term contract concluded with LPP for the sale of energy from renewable sources. This PPA concerns the supply to LPP of 35,800 MWh of energy per year for the next 10 years with an option to extend it for another five years, Figene Capital reported. Figene Capital announced in a stock exchange release that as of January 1, its subsidiary Figene Energia would start the implementation of a long-term contract for the sale of electricity from renewable energy sources (PPA - Power



Purchase Agreement) concluded with LPP.

The wind farm of the company from the Figene Group is already connected to the grid and will supply LPP facilities with green electricity from the beginning of 2023. The agreement concerns, as stated, the sale of electricity produced i.a. by the company of Figene - Take The Wind, whose wind farm with a capacity of 3.5 MW in the municipality of Złotów in the province of in the Wielkopolskie Voivodeship produces eclectic energy.

Previously, Figene Capital said that the installed capacity of the Take The Wind

wind farm in accordance with the connection conditions is 3.5 MW, and its maximum capacity is 3.8 MW. It was reported that the power plant will generate approximately 8,500 MWh of energy per year.

"Figene Capital, in addition to providing green energy to the clothing company, intends to acquire a strategic financial partner in 2023 and start implementing a portfolio of wind farm projects with a potential capacity of 110 MW," said Robert Koński, Vice President of the Management Board of Figene Capital, quoted in the company's press release.

MAP OF NEW ROAD CONSTRUCTION IN POLAND IN 2023

The General Directorate for National Roads and Highways (GDDKiA) unveils plans for 2023.

Almost 565 km - this is the total length of road sections for which the GDDKiA intends to announce tenders in 2023. Their total value is approx. PLN 28.6 billion. The GDDKiA has secured funding for their implementation. As part of the Government Program for the Construction of National Roads until 2030 (with a perspective until 2033), adopted by the Council of Ministers on December 13, 2022, the GDDKiA will announce tenders for roads with a length of approx. 480 km. In turn, under the program for the construction of 100 bypasses. These will be investments with a total length of approx. 85 km.

Important connections along expressways...

Planned tenders include long stretches of highways. These include 114 km of the S10 expressway, which will connect the Zachodniopomorskie and Wielkopolskie voivodeships. It will be a section from Szczecin to Piła, excluding the already functioning fragments (Zdunowo - Stargard and the Wałcz bypass). Another long stretch is 71 km of the S74 expressway in the province of Świętokrzyskie, from the border with the Łódzkie prov-

ince to Mniów and from Cezdyna to the beginning of the Opatów bypass. In the province Lower Silesia, there will be a tender for a 64 km extension of the S8 from Magnice to Barda near Wrocław. There will also be a search for contractors for approx. 127 km of the S11 expressway in the province of Zachodniopomorskie, Wielkopolskie and Opolskie.

... and no less important bypasses

The GDDKiA plans to announce tenders for sections of national roads that will close the ring roads currently un-

The plans of the GDDKiA for 2023 are not only new road sections. It is also planning tenders for the extension of nearly 360 km of existing national roads.



Government National Road Construction Program until 2030 (480 km)

der construction: Warzymice and Przeclaw (West Pomeranian Voivodeship), as well as Poręba and Zawiercie (Silesian Voivodeship). Also being continued are the implementation of the program for the construction of 100 bypasses, announcing tenders for 12 tasks. Among them are e.g. the ring roads of Głogów, Stargard, Kołbaskowo and the second stage of the Sanok ring road.

Below is a full list of roads with a total length of approx. 565 km, for which we are ready to announce tender procedures in 2023.

Government National Road Construction Program until 2030 (480 km)

S7 Czosnów - Kielpin
S8 Barda - Wrocław (Magnice)
S10 Szczecin - Piła
S11 Bobolice - Szczecinek
S11 Oborniki - Poznań Północ along with the Oborniki bypass
S11 Ostrów Wielkopolski - Kępno
S11 Kępno - the beginning of the Olesno bypass
S12 Gr. province Łódź and Mazowieckie - Wieniawa junction
S19 Sokółka North - Dobrzyniewo
S74 Gr. province Łódź and Świętokrzyskie - Przełom/Mniów
S74 Cezdyna - Łagów along with the Łagów bypass
S74 Łagów - Jałowiec - the beginning of the Opatów bypass
DK13 Siadło Górne - Szczecin West (2nd stage of the ring road of Warzymice and Przeclaw)
DK25 bypasses of Kamień Krajeński and Sępólno Krajeński
DK78 Kromotów - Żerkowice (2nd stage of the Poręba and Zawiercie bypass)

100 bypass construction program for 2020-2030 (85 km)

DK8 Białobrzegi bypass
DK12 Głogów bypass
DK12 Srocka bypass

DK13 Kołbaskowo bypass
DK20 Stargard bypass
DK22 Rusinów bypass
DK22 bypass of Sweden
DK22 ring road of Wałcz
DK28 Sanok bypass (stage II)
DK29 bypass of Krosno Odrzańskie
DK78 Kroczyce bypass
DK78 Pradel bypass

The plans of the GDDKiA for 2023 are not only new road sections. It is also planning tenders for the extension of nearly 360 km of existing national roads.

“We are publishing our tender plans now so that construction companies can plan the next construction season in advance. The management boards of the companies will know how to prepare, how to deploy forces and what investments to make in order to prepare properly calculated offers in subsequent GDDKiA proceedings. This predictability and transparency affect the stability of the construction industry,” a spokesperson said.

During regular meetings with representatives of the executive industry, the GDDKiA appeals for professional valuation of submitted offers. Currently, GDDKiA contracts apply a 10% indexation limit. This covers contracts concluded at all stages of works on a road investment, i.e. from the development of preparatory documentation, through design, to construction works and supervision over contract implementation.



100 bypass construction program for 2020-2030 (85 km)

LEGAL CORNER

SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING – THE "NEW" OLD?



The European Union has finally laid down foundations for standardizing reporting obligations on sustainability issues across European markets. Ambiguities around non-financial reporting had been growing. However, we still need to wait a couple of months for the specifics of reporting standards to be unveiled, as the CSRD directive has delegated their adoption to the Commission.



Aleksandra Jach
legal advisor, Counsel, Real Estate
Wolf Theiss

since 2018 (for 2017 FY). However, the "non-financial" term was found to be misleading, as these matters are indeed of significant financial relevance. Additionally, the requirements have been made more specific to ensure comparability between data provided by companies across EU undertakings and thus replaced with the "sustainability matters" category.

Plan to engage in limiting global warming

Sustainability reporting requires that the description of an entity's business model and strategy specify, among other things, its resilience to risks related to sustainability matters. To give a rough example, a large grain supplier will need to present its business strategy in relation to how its activities are dependent on climate change – e.g. adverse weather conditions existing in a given country (e.g. abnormal droughts or rains). Additionally, the management report will have to describe: (i) the undertaking's plans (including financial and investment plans) to ensure its business model and strategy are aligned with a sustainable economy that aims to limit global warming to 1.5C in line with the Paris Agreement, and (ii) what deadlines the company has set

to achieve GHG reduction and its progress towards achieving it. The sustainability report will need to specify the company's internal organization scheme:



Sustainability reporting requires that the description of an entity's business model and strategy specify, among other things, its resilience to risks related to sustainability matters.

how its management, administrative and supervisory bodies engage in sustainability matters and whether the members of its bodies are incentivized to pursue sustainability targets.

A novelty: the extraterritorial effect

Some undertakings from third countries will be also affected by the EU sustainability reporting obligations. These obligations will apply in particular to entities whose securities are admitted to trading on a regulated market in the EU and to undertakings which, although governed by a third-country's laws, generate a net turnover of more than EUR 150 million in the EU and have a branch or a subsidiary in the EU (additional rules on applicability of additional EUR 40 million turnover threshold will apply here as well).

As regards EU undertakings, sustainability reporting will be extended among others to: (a) large undertakings (i.e. which on their balance sheet dates have exceeded at least two of the following three criteria: (i) a balance sheet total of EUR 20 M (ii) a net turnover of EUR 40 M (iii) an average number of employees during the financial year of 250 (as referred to in Article 3 of the accounting directive); (b) medium and small size undertakings (except for micro undertakings), which are public interest entities. However, the obligations will be implemented gradually, as the Member States are obliged to implement relevant laws by 6 July 2024, new large reporting subjects will need to report for the financial year as of 1 January 2025 and SMEs for the financial year starting on or after 1 January 2026.

What is CSRD?

The CSRD directive focuses on corporate sustainability reporting, but is mainly an amendment directive as it ensures substantial changes to the existing Accounting Directive. By linking sustainability reporting with accounting obligations, annual management reports will need to contain relevant information on sustainability matters.

Are CSRD matters something new?

No, sustainability matters are a broader and more specific category of "non-financial matters." Around 11,700 entities across Europe (large undertakings of public-interest with an average number of employees exceeding 500) have already been reporting on "non-financial matters" based on the NFRD directive

Sustainability reporting format

Sustainability reports will be handled electronically, based on standards adopted by the Commission by 30 June 2023 (except for e.g. sector-specific guidelines, which will need to be adopted by 30 June 2024). Sustainability reports will be subject to professional auditing, which will be carried out by accredited entities only.

To date, due to the lack of clear EU guidelines and frameworks, NFRD-eligible entities have been using GRI, TCFD, CDP or SASB frameworks and standards to report on non-financial matters. The Commission's delegated acts on the new standards will be prepared taking into account the aforementioned frameworks.

Find us on the EU airports



GERMANS AND POLES: PARTNERS ON A GLOBAL STAGE

Sylwia Ziemacka talked to Dr Lars Gutheil, Executive Board member of the German-Polish Chamber of Industry and Commerce about cooperation between our countries.

Let's start with the general question – how would you define the nature of business relations between Poland and Germany? Is the current geopolitical and economic crisis an opportunity?

It's always dangerous to say a crisis is an opportunity because many companies face the crisis and it's a difficult situation for many of them at the moment in Poland and in Germany. But I would like to stress that we have seen a lot of change in the last two to three years with the pandemic and the war in Ukraine. We have had to face many challenges and this was very clear from our conference "German-Polish markets of the future" in Potsdam at the end of 2022. There were many very innovative companies from Poland presenting themselves for the German market. We can see that the market is really moving when we speak of the German-Polish trade relations. Of course it is mainly based on traditional areas like automotive and machinery and these are markets facing great disruption at the moment. There is still a lot of insecurity but we see that companies are

stepping up and are really keen on making new steps. Mercedes has just announced a battery plant in Poland and you see that a lot of investment in automotive batteries. That is an area that is growing most in Polish-German trade and Poland has really become a very important partner for German business.

Some 25% of Poland's trade is with Germany. There is also a lot of investment from Germany to Poland. Companies with German capital are responsible for 400,000 direct jobs. Vice versa, Poland is also really gaining a very important position for many German purchases and for German companies. And that is happening mainly through innovation. A company like Ekoenergtyka, a former startup from Zielona Góra, now employs 700 people and is delivering loading systems for example to the City of Paris or the City of Berlin. That's a success story made in a very innovative area and I think Poland is very strong here. I find that quite encouraging and we see strong interest from good Polish companies to enter the German market.

What is the impact of the war in Ukraine on the perception of Poland in Germany?

At the beginning of 2022 it had a massive impact also on the business of our chamber. We had been supporting investors on their way into Poland and many projects were put on hold. Not because of Poland but because of the insecurity in the markets due to the war. But we have since seen that this business has rebounded strongly. We had as many inquiries for investment in Poland in the first half of 2022 as we had in the previous year, so you can say that the interest has doubled. I believe that Poland is benefiting a lot from the change in sup-



ply chains. We have seen that in the pandemic, but I think also the war in Ukraine, inflation, the greater insecurity that we see, and also the fact that the Silk Road from China is not really working anymore – which makes people and companies think how they can act a little bit more securely. We have clients who want to stay in China, or in Asia generally but they want to have a second option. They want to have a security option so they're building a mirror version of the production site they have elsewhere and in this Poland is a logical number one choice. Poland has a lot to offer, including a skilled workforce. Of course it's getting more difficult, but in comparison to other markets in Central and Eastern Europe it's still actually quite good. I think the interest of German investors coming to Poland is unbroken and it's actually growing.

What I find interesting and what Poland can definitely learn from the Germans is cooperation when dealing with small and medium-sized enterprises.

Yes, it's true that 99% of German business is actually middle-sized and small business. There is always the question of how you define it. I think this area is quite similar to Poland and I think this is also why German and Polish companies can actually deal so well with each other. They understand each other a lot better than in some other markets. Our typical client is a healthy middle-sized internationally active company that wants to enter the Polish market. On the other side we have a growing number of Polish companies entering the German market as they have reached the level where they can compete well in other markets. I think most of these middle-sized companies are usually

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somewhere in the supply chain and somewhat dependent on classic markets like automotive, machinery and also very much vulnerable to disruption in these markets.

What's highly important for them is to innovate, to use a lot

”

Poland is also really gaining a very important position for many German purchases and for German companies. And that is happening mainly through innovation.



Dr Lars Gutheil, Executive Board member of the German-Polish Chamber of Industry and Commerce; Ina Hänsel, President, IHK Potsdam; Prof. Jörg Steinbach, Minister for Economic Affairs, Labour and Energy, Land Brandenburg

of R&D - more than in the past and not be afraid of big things like the energy transition or digitization. It's very important to get the information that is needed and to set the right steps. We are trying to help in this process.

At the moment we are facing a change in the energy markets - renewable energies, energy efficiency. Just recently I handed out awards for Innovative Polish companies in the field of Energy Efficiency. "The young Energy Europe" project, with 50 participants from Poland, delivered great examples of how you can save energy and do something for the environment but also for your pocket.

The other topic of course is digitalization and we are very active as a chamber in the field of industry 4.0 and are going to introduce a study together with the SWPS University in Warsaw early this year where employees from middle size and small companies get a chance to learn more about how to implement digital procedures in companies. We see that the demand is really there and we feel that this is exactly what companies want in the market at the moment.

Transforming business means investments and in times of insecurity this is a budgetary position that companies are trying to reduce. Is there any good advice here?

Of course I understand that companies want to lower their costs and they need to be careful about taking big investment steps. I think it's important to focus on what is important for the company, but if you wait too long with Investments it can also be a very big risk. At the moment it's a very complicated, very difficult time for many companies, but we are trying as a chamber to give as much

information as possible. We organize events where companies can tell us what potential there is in various markets. I think cooperation between Polish and German partners can also really help in making the right steps and getting through these very difficult times.

ESG is something very much in the business agenda. How do you embrace the topic in AHK?

ESG is definitely a topic that has become a lot more relevant for us too. We do events and workshops and we set up a couple of work groups consisting of Polish and German companies. They are working on topics like for example energy efficiency, renewables and the whole range of ESG topics. We see that the activities have really grown and the questions coming to our chamber are also growing. I already mentioned our project "The young energy Europe" aimed at reducing CO₂ emissions and that is something that we want to push for the future more strongly.

In the current situation companies want to save as much energy as possible and are open to introducing more modern structures and procedures.

Of course support from the political side is required here. Poland is still very dependent on fossil fuels and a transformation toward renewables is critical. But I'm optimistic. I think there is awareness in companies and it's clear that the mindset is there. It is especially important for medium sized suppliers. With CO₂ and ESG regulations that put pressure on global players, all the companies in the value chain will have to adjust too.

We already discussed some of the markets of the future. Are there any other sectors worth mentioning when it comes to Polish-German cooperation?

A very important market of the future, where we also see a lot of disruption and change, is health. We see a lot of interest at the moment in pharmaceutical and medical technology. These are areas where we see lots of activities between Polish and German partners. Polish partners are really acting on a top level with very interesting developments and high quality solutions.

As a chamber once a year we give the Polish-German business award and this year we gave it to a med-tech company that has developed an app that allows people with brain damage and people who are unable to move to restart communication. There is even one person that wrote a book without being able to move physically thanks to this app. I think it's a very innovative solution and they're rolling it out in Germany with a lot of success.

I would like to ask about recent findings that show that more Polish companies decide to invest in Germany, also because they perceive your country as a gateway to other markets.

Yes, indeed. We observe a growing number of Polish companies



We see a lot of interest at the moment in pharmaceutical and medical technology. These are areas where we see lots of activities between Polish and German partners.

More complicated aspects refer to the bureaucracy. The fact that Germany has very different rules in the different states can be confusing for somebody who is not familiar with the German market. There is also a language issue. Of course more and more German companies have people who speak very good English but if you really want to succeed in Germany it always makes sense to have somebody with you who also speaks German.

And is it true that Polish companies perceive Germany as a trampoline for further expansion?

interested in entering the German market. Currently more than 50% of AHK clients are Polish. It has really changed in the last few years.

Absolutely true. Many companies from Poland have used Germany in the past as a step to Asia, mainly to China. A few weeks ago we did research and asked how Polish companies deal with the China question compared to German companies. In Germany we have this huge discussion ongoing: What could be the next potential risk market and if it were China, what would a conflict with Taiwan mean? More and more German companies are aware of the China question. We see the difficulties also with the corona pandemic and supply chain disruption. So German companies have become a bit more cautious when it comes to investments in this market but we don't really see the same discussion in Poland. The interesting outcome of our research was that of course there is far less direct Polish investment in China but many Polish companies are active in China through Germany and so the whole discussion that happens in Germany is of course highly relevant for Poland as well.

A lot of these companies have very often already tried to be active in Germany but when they saw how difficult it is, decided to rethink the strategy. In the second step they are looking for partners. And that's an important lesson - if you want to go to Germany don't underestimate the difficulty of entering this market. It's a quite complicated market, a risky one, so you must be prepared and have good partners at hand. You must set slow steps and not hope that you can conquer Germany in just a day. It's impossible.

We also make inquiries among foreign investors in Germany every year. This year we got a positive response that they are very positive about the way German companies deal with payments - they pay on time, so they have a reliable partnership. They're also very positive on the infrastructure in Germany.

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We have a growing number of Polish companies entering the German market as they have reached the level where they can compete well in other markets.

THE YEAR OF POLISH MEDICAL BIOTECHNOLOGY



2022 was a breakthrough year for the Polish medical biotechnology industry. For the first time in history, the sector was noticed on a larger scale by the government and recognized as a strategic segment that could improve the competitiveness of the Polish economy.



Marta Winiarska
president of the board, BioInMed

Due to the post-pandemic economic fallout, as well as the unstable geopolitical situation, it was also a year full of challenges for the industry. Despite this, Polish companies did not give up in their efforts to develop new drugs and therapies that would respond to unmet medical needs. The companies also managed to carry out several significant business transactions, which further marked the presence of the Polish medical biotechnology sector in the international value chain.

In June 2022, the Government Plan for the Development of the Biomedical Sector for 2022-2031 was adopted. This is a bold strategy aimed at permanently entering Poland into the global bloodstream of medical innovation. As part of the program's implementation, the first calls were launched by Medical Research Agency, aimed at financial support for projects in the area of new drugs and new therapies in the field of protein

products, cell therapies, as well as nucleic acids and small molecule drugs. So far, seven projects with a financial allocation of almost PLN 170 million have been recommended for co-financing. Recruitment in the second of the calls related to the development of innovative original drugs finishes at the end of February 2023.

The development of projects in the area of "large" innovations with a supranational scale of novelties, i.e. new therapies (first in class or better in class), new diagnostic methods that allow for a more effective fight for patients' lives and health, may improve the country's health in the long term and contribute



So far, seven projects with a financial allocation of almost PLN 170 million have been recommended for co-financing. Recruitment in the second of the calls related to the development of innovative original drugs finishes at the end of February 2023.

to increasing the availability of innovative therapies. This is undoubtedly a significant opportunity for strengthening Poland's scientific and economic potential in the coming decades.

War in Ukraine and post-covid economic challenges

Galloping inflation combined with an increase in the prices of energy, goods and services resulted in a significant increase in the burden on the sector. Due to the increase in prices, the purchasing power of grants granted in earlier years from European funds under SG OP significantly decreased, which resulted in the revision of plans for R&D projects.

The geopolitical situation and challenges related to the pandemic have also caused delays in many projects. Increased morbidity of employees with advanced, often niche, skills that cannot be easily replaced, problems with supply chains and prolonged waiting times, e.g. for reagents, laboratory equipment and the slowed down recruitment of patients for clinical trials meant that a large part of prospective projects will not be able to be completed within the deadline set by the European Union for the implementation of R&D works under the EU funding perspective that is ending, i.e. by the end of 2023.

For this reason, BioInMed has repeatedly appealed to decision-makers, both at the national and EU level, to develop solutions that will prevent the closure of valuable projects aimed at developing new therapeutic technologies solely due to the expiry of deadlines.

"We are pleased with the declaration of the Ministry of Develop-

ment Funds and Regional Policy that it will be possible to phase R&D projects and transfer some works to the new financial perspective. If the National Center for Research and Development urgently processes this scheme jointly with UE funds beneficiaries, there is hope that those projects running for several years, in which successive milestones are being successfully achieved, will not be wasted" says Marta Winiarska, President of the Polish Association of Innovative Medical Biotechnology Companies BioInMed.

The geopolitical situation and global economic challenges also had a significant impact on the capital market. After the COVID-19 boom in medical biotechnology, listed companies in this sector recorded significant declines. The situation beyond Poland's eastern border and the threat of recession, despite many business successes, led to investors moving away from growth sectors in favor of traditional industries with lower investment risk.

Milestones and significant deals despite challenges

Despite a difficult and challenging year, companies from the medical biotechnology sector continued their R&D projects aimed at developing new drugs, therapies and diagnostic methods. Some companies have completed preclinical development and have planned or even obtained the regulator's permission to start clinical trials (including Poltreg, Molecure, Pure Biologics, JJP Biologics and Captor Therapeutics), while others have received positive data from already conducted clinical trials (including among others Ryvu, WPD Pharmaceuticals or Celon Pharma), allowing for the planning of subsequent phases. The registration of the first Polish biosimilar drug by the American Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is certainly worth noting.

2022 was also full of significant, multi-million business transactions concerning the sale of companies and inventions (including the Blirt agreement with QIAGEN or the Scope Fluidics/Curiosity Diagnostics with the American Bio-Rad Laboratories), the licensing of Polish patented technologies (including an agreement between Ryvu with the American Excilis or Pure Biologics with Novaptech, as well as establishing research cooperation in the development of new drugs (including Ryvu with the German BioNTech and Captor with the Japanese Ono



We have a real chance to witness the creation of the first Polish original drug and a breakthrough in Poland's importance both in the economic context and in the progress in medicine

Pharmaceutical). Interestingly, foreign investors value Polish companies much higher than investors in the domestic Warsaw Stock Exchange. It is also worth noting that the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation decided to co-finance Polish research and development projects in medical biotechnology (ExploRNA Therapeutics).

2023 - international accents and new development impulses

The new year brings another development impulse for the sector in the form of a new EU funding perspective in the form of the European Funds for Modern Economy program. As announced by the government, the call for applications is to start in the first quarter of 2023. In addition, if funds from the National Recovery Plan are successfully released, it will also be possible to announce new calls by the Medical Research Agency and co-finance projects to develop new drugs - the first and better in class, which will respond to unmet health needs.

An important element for including Polish medical biotechnology in the global value chain will be the presentation of Polish potential in the international arena. In cooperation with the relevant ministries, government agencies, as well as embassies, BioInMed is planning promoting of Polish medical biotechnology, among other on the US, Israeli and United Arab Emirates markets.

"There is no doubt that medical biotechnology has settled in the minds of Polish decision-makers for good as a strategic area and national good. We have a real chance to witness the creation of the first Polish original drug and a breakthrough in Poland's importance both in the economic context and in the progress in medicine," says Winiarska.

WROCLAW: THE PLACE TO BE FOR STARTUPS

In 2022, the capital of Lower Silesia became the capital of the Polish startups scene.



Paulina Muszyńska
Head of Startup Wrocław

December turned out to be an amazing month for Wrocław's startup ecosystem. Within days, it was recognized on a Polish and international scale, thanks to reports by Dealroom and the Startup Poland Foundation, which unanimously confirmed that the capital of Lower Silesia is now officially a leading technology hub.

Wrocław was ranked top of Polish cities in the category of emerging technology hub stars in the "The next generation of tech ecosystems" report prepared by Dealroom. The authors analyzed 201 cities from 65 countries and identified those where innovation is best developing. The capital of Lower Silesia also ranked second in Europe and eighth in the world, a clear indication that it is a great place to set up startups and develop innovation.

"Wrocław, Lower Silesia, has been called Poland's 'Silicon Val-

ley' for years. It is in our region that some of the most innovative projects are created. Here we try to create friendly conditions for the development of many companies and startups, using their knowledge and solutions. And today we can proudly say that this is bringing tangible results. To a large extent, this is due to the activity of the Startup Wrocław team, established within the Wrocław Agglomeration Development Agency, whose main task is to animate and integrate the local startup community. The synergy between startups, business, science and city institutions creates the foundation for an excellent business ecosystem, which is growing at an incredible pace in our city," says Jacek Sutryk, Mayor of Wrocław.

The next generation of tech ecosystems report describes the cities it considers to be the largest or most promising innovation hubs. It evaluates cities based on the availability of capital, the innovation and quality of local academic centers, economic development and the pace of startup development.

The most important publication of the Polish ecosystem is created on the basis of research and information of several hundred respondents and analysis by startup industry experts. Wrocław and Lower Silesia have special reasons to be happy this

year, because it is here that the largest number of technological companies in Poland are registered. The latest Polish Startups 2022 report confirmed that the title 'Polish Silicon Valley' belongs to our region.

"Wrocław's startup ecosystem is complete and extremely active, and this is what makes us unique compared to other cities," says Magdalena Okulowska, CEO of the Wrocław Agglomeration Development Agency. "The companies being created here are internationally successful, which proves that the technology scene here stands at a very high level," she adds.



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The report asks which region of Poland can be described as the Polish Silicon Valley? Two provinces definitely come out on top when it comes to the number of registered startups - the largest number (21%) is in Lower Silesia, with Mazovia in second place. Thus, Wrocław and Warsaw are the two main centers chosen by domestic startups. Third place is occupied by the Lesser Poland Voivodeship (Krakow) - every tenth entity questioned was registered there. The promotion of Wrocław on the startup map of Poland is significant. Last year, Mazovia had 32% and Lower Silesia 9%.



Mateusz Jarzombek, Magdalena Okulowska, Maciej Jacenik, Paulina Muszyńska from Wrocław Agglomeration Development Agency (ARAW)



Andrea Bandirali
Innovation Manager,
Italstartup

Silicon Silesia

1. LOCATION

Poland's second city perfectly fits into the development of this large area between Germany and Austria on one side and on the other big capitals such as Warsaw and Prague, which act as natural centers for business and finance.

Wrocław is close to all the most important urban agglomerations in Central Europe, but also far enough away from them to not be influenced too strongly by them.

Symbiosis and strong cooperation is possible, also because Wrocław can be the perfect solution for many startups still at an early stage, when finance comes from friends or Business Angels.

Cities like Berlin and Vienna are maybe more attractive, but too expensive for such companies, and in those cities there is too much competition, making it often not easy to start a new company.

2. PEOPLE

Especially in its very first steps, a startup needs to find interdisciplinary workers, as teams face a myriad of challenges. So that's why it could be difficult to hire

multi-skilled people in a place where thousands of companies are already desperately looking for workers.

The presence of many students, enterprising young people and expats, including many from Ukraine, also represents a very important key to the development of Wrocław.

Startup founders can find numerous job opportunities if their project faces difficult periods, precisely by working temporarily in the large corporations in the area, which are always looking for personnel.

The lower cost of living compared to many other large centers and the pleasantness of the city mean that many digital no-

3 reasons why does Wrocław have the potential to become the leading digital hub in Central-Eastern Europe?

mads also frequent this metropolis on the Odra river (also ideal for digital familyists), thanks to the infrastructure and the very high quality of life.

3. POTENTIAL

Wrocław has seen the arrival of large investments in recent years. The city and its inhabitants are still in the process of discovering their own potential - for sure there are still too few incubators and accelerators for sustaining the needs of startups, but we hope it's just a matter of months, not years.

One may even see the same evolutionary path we observed in the last 15 years in Berlin. This is of course also not a big sur-

prise, as the capital of the historic region of Silesia is already absorbing a lot of investment from Germany and many other industrialized countries. The first to arrive in recent years have been large industrial settlements, especially in the field of logistics, appliances and the automotive sector.

A virtuous circle can be triggered that attracts the development of large digital companies which have already invested in many other cities in western Europe. They could be excellently connected to CEE Countries, expanding the natural space for the evolution of their business, simply by putting their hubs in Wrocław.



POLES CLIMBING THE SPANISH PROPERTY LADDER

A record number of residential properties in Spain was bought by Poles in 2022, with 2,300 bought in the first nine months of 2022, double the figure for the whole of 2021, according to figures published by Pekao, Poland's second largest bank.

■ Poles now constitute 3.2% of foreign buyers in Spain, up from 1.9% in 2021.

Bartłomiej Grzywniak of Tripinvest – a firm specialising in Spanish real estate – told the Interia news service that there was an “explosion” of interest in such investments among Poles following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February.

“Those who were concerned about cash quickly decided to make a transaction,” he says. “People were looking for a place where they could escape safely. Spain was the most popular choice because it is far away and relatively cheap. For 400,000-500,000 zlotys you could afford to buy an apartment.”

His firm says that Poles most often buy properties in the €100,000-150,000 price range. The most common location is on the Costa Blanca, close to the Mediterranean Sea.

“The driving force was fear,” Tatiana Pękala, the owner of Dream Property, said in an interview with INNPoland.pl.

Many people want to use their apartments right after buying them – and not (as in the past) only after retirement.

“The share of Poles among foreign buyers increased to a record level of 3.2% in September 2022,” Pekao wrote on Twitter.

“Poles began intensively buying apartments in Spain right after the pandemic, as soon as it was



Poles began intensively buying apartments in Spain right after the pandemic, as soon as it was possible to fly again. After the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, their activity increased even more, driven by fear.

possible to fly again. After the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, their activity increased even more, driven by fear. On the second day after the war broke out, I received 38 calls from brand new potential customers. For comparison, in normal time we receive such a number of calls from new contacts on average within a month,” says Pękala.

It was the war in Ukraine that accelerated the decision-making process. – Many people, talking about the reasons for their decision to buy a property in Spain right now, admitted that they were afraid of the future and that Russia could attack Poland.

“As this interest continues, many agencies operating on the Costa del Sol for years now open the so-called Polish departments where they employ Polish-speaking people,” points out Pękala.

Cars with Polish registration plates are driving more and more often, Polish children go to school here. The Polish language is heard more and more often in shops and restaurants, he argues.

“Now more and more often they are younger people aged between thirty and forty-something, who have built well-functioning companies in Poland (e.g. in the IT industry). During the pandemic, it turned out that they can work online. And here working online is more fun. Ideas for moving vary: some rent an apartment for

a few months to see if life here suits them. Others buy right away and move here with their entire families,” Pękala says.

Why Spain? There are several reasons, but the price is certainly not one of them. “Spanish apartments are not cheap, prices have been rising continuously for several years, but Spain attracts us with what is missing in Poland,” points out Pękala.

The average property price in Spain is €1,923/sq m. (7.5% more expensive yoy). One pays €4,352/sq m for an apartment in Barcelona. (an increase of 5.4% y/y), and in Malaga €2,257/sq m.

In terms of average wages adjusted for cost of living, Poland ranks one place behind Spain among OECD countries.



Polish flights level up and running

■ “Traffic at Polish airports recovered in 2022 far faster than we assumed. In March last year we conservatively estimated that Chopin Airport would handle over 10 million passengers. Now we know that it is already over 14 million,” Anna Dermont, PPL and Chopin Airport spokesperson, told PAP.

The structure of the market has also changed, she added. “Passengers are more likely to choose charters. In the summer, we beat the results from 2019 when it comes to non-scheduled flights. The structure increases seasonally and due to the need to adapt to this situation,” she said, adding that transit traffic is slowly recovering – not only from pandemic levels, but also from falls due to the outbreak of war in Ukraine, which had a significant impact. “At the turn of February and March, we serviced many repatriation flights, there were a lot of refugees leaving Poland and it was a point-to-point move-

ment. In the second half of the year, transit traffic began to return,” she said.

According to Dermont, PPL will face two challenges in 2023. “First of all – we are opening the airport in Radom in April. There is a lot of interest in flights from this airport from travel agencies and passengers. There are also high expectations for the development of the region – recently there was even an idea to call the airport Warszawa-Radom-Kielce. This shows that the port is important not only for Mazovia or Radom itself, but also for other cities,” the spokeswoman said.

The second challenge will be the commercialization of PPL and the inclusion of the company in the CPK Group. “The construction of the Centralny Port Komunikacyjny is extremely important for Poland, so it is important that we support this project with our efforts and knowledge,” she pointed out.

Respondents in a recent piece of research - training HR specialists surveyed by GoodHabitZ in the 'Balance of professional development' report - indicated that learning & development (L&D) budgets are not big enough. Due to the economic slowdown, 2023 will be a challenge for planning development strategies. However, research clearly shows that it is an investment that should not be abandoned.

Current economic events are leading to more cautious budgetary policies among companies. Employers are looking for savings and reducing costs, which very often has a negative impact on the budget for developing employee skills. The GoodHabitZ report showed that respondents are convinced that a good training strategy supports the company, not only in terms of talent recruitment and retention, but also protects it against market difficulties and allows it to generate profits. Still many employers operate without a plan in this area - as many as one in three companies do not have a training and development strategy.

At the beginning of this year, further increases in operating costs are forecast, so entrepreneurs will have to face new challenges. According to research, it is investment in talent that can protect companies from market turbulence in 2023.

A shield against market turbulence

Reducing training budgets in the face of an economic slowdown would be a serious mistake, 67% of the surveyed experts said. What's more, good strategies for acquiring new skills can even be a shield for companies.

"Nearly 8 out of 10 experts surveyed by us claim that staff training and development has a chance to be one of the recipes for the challenges related to the economic slowdown, and even more, as much as 87% considered them to be a factor positively influencing the financial results of companies. In addition, 74% said that raising the skills of employees in these circumstances is an important challenge for their organizations. These answers even more emphasize the role of the right strategy in achieving the company's goals related to the area of learning & development," said Daniel Idźkowski, Country Director at GoodHabitZ Poland.

An effective incentive for candidates and a way to retain employees

Another area in which HR training experts see the important role of skills development is retention of talent in the com-



SKILL DEVELOPMENT IS ALL THE RAGE IN 2023

Although the awareness of the role of training in companies is already high, the balance of opportunities created by HR experts for training is not always positive.

pany. Opportunities for development have long been among the most important factor in choosing a job by Poles, just after pay issues - and they can help employees stay longer in the company. Nearly 9 out of 10 respondents believe that a good strategy for the development of employee skills can prevent them from changing jobs, while the same percentage adds that access to training and development has a significant impact on retaining staff in the organization. What's more, over 2/3 of the HR experts were convinced that companies that invest in



Access to development opportunities allows not only the current staff to be kept, but also to build the company's brand among candidates. Nearly 8 out of 10 respondents admitted that people participating in job interviews ask recruiters about the training offer.

learning & development have fewer problems with high employee turnover.

Access to development opportunities allows not only the current staff to be kept, but also to build the company's brand among candidates. Nearly 8 out of 10 respondents admitted that people participating in job interviews ask recruiters about the training offer.

The strategy of skill development in organizations is all the more important in the changing business situation. On one hand, budgets for training new staff skills are expected to increase, and on the other hand, there will be strong pressure on responsible budgetary policy in the face of the economic slowdown. Research indicates a high intensity of both of these phenomena. Among the HR experts, more than half expect an increase in the L&D budget in their company in the next 2-3 years, while only every eleventh predicted a decrease.

This is an optimistic perspective from the point of view of those responsible for training, but also the employees themselves, who gain development

opportunities. However, the aforementioned changes in the economy may stand in the way of the implementation of these plans. Two out of three training experts agreed that high inflation and rising costs could affect their company's L&D practice in the near future. In addition, half of the respondents admitted that recent economic events have had a negative impact on training budgets in their organizations.

"From the point of view of the employer, development programs are tools for building a competitive advantage. On the other hand, for the employee, the employer's actions guaranteeing the expansion of knowledge is a proof of faith in his or her potential, as well as a factor building a sense of stability. However, a well-designed L&D program must take into account not only the perspective of current and potential employees. Cooperation with business - understanding the strategy, priorities and market trends - is the basis for every effective development strategy. Unfortunately, one of the market trends that we also observe at Capgemini is challenges resulting from rising inflation and an uncertain economic situation. Wise management of companies' budgets, especially those allocated to development, will mean saving money on the one hand, and maximizing each investment on the other. That is why it is so important to analyze all research and observations that will al-



By supporting the recruitment and retention of talent, the training strategy is able to protect companies from difficult times, which are likely to be exacerbated in 2023.

low you to effectively plan the use of available HR budgets," said Ewa Gołębiewska, President of the Management Board, Vice-President, HR Director at Capgemini Polska.

By supporting the recruitment and retention of talent, the training strategy is able to protect companies from difficult times, which are likely to be exacerbated in 2023. Today, it will be important from the organization's perspective to properly plan funds for development, which in turn will bring multi-level and long-term profit.

About the Report

The Balance of professional development report is the first in Poland covering such a comprehensive study of challenges, aspirations and opinions of HR experts for training. The content of the report is based on a quantitative study carried out by GoodHabitZ and dat:awesome by Linkleaders in August and September 2022. A group of 114 HR experts in training working in Poland took part in the measurement using the professional online form (CAWI).



KICKSTARTING YOUR HEALTH — NEW YEAR EDITION



Or Hever

Physiotherapist and Personal trainer, CEO-Move4Life, Medical fitness manager – Sense Med Concept (based in Warsaw)

As we move into 2023, it is important to focus on improving our wellbeing after the last three years. January brings a brand-new year and with it comes a fresh opportunity to establish good eating and exercise habits that will last throughout the entire year and improve your well-being.

The key is to create a routine that you can actually adhere to.

Here is some of the best advice I have come up with over that 15-years of working with clients.

By taking small steps to look after yourself and your mental health, you can find ways to feel positive and be in control of your wellbeing. Here are some tips to help you get started:

First and foremost, it's important to have a clear goal in mind.

What do you want to achieve when it comes to your health and fitness and well-being? Whether it's losing weight, gaining muscle, or just feeling better overall, it's important to have a target to focus on. Some use the SMART method (SMART is a goal-setting tool used to create specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-based goals) and it works for some. I prefer to use the KIS approach (Keep it simple).

Some common goals clients often share with me are: Feeling better: physically and mentally, recovering from an injury/illness, improving their work/life balance and in January we usually start preparing clients for the Ski season.

There has been a shift from "Traditional" fitness goal-setting towards more holistic and general goals in the last several years, especially in the 35+ age group.

Next, make a plan because a "Goal without a plan is just a wish." You may choose to do it by yourself, but I recommend that you try working with a professional. A good Dietitian/Physiotherapist/Personal Trainer will save you a lot of time, money and effort while optimizing your results.

I recommend starting simply with a three-day food journal, reflecting how you are doing in real-life, not how you think you are, but what your diet is actually like.

Weighing yourself on a regular basis (2-3 times a week) is a proven method to help you monitor your progress - or lack of it. The only exceptions are



I recommend starting simply with a three-day food journal, reflecting how you are doing in real-life, not how you think you are, but what your diet is actually like.

people with a history of eating disorders or strong emotional reaction when stepping on the scales.

Exercise: you can exercise at the gym or at home, in a group or by yourself. There are many options, but the key is consistency. Ask yourself, what kind of person are you? Is there a sport or an activity you enjoy? Or an activity you always wanted to try.

One element I always promote is resistance training: Resistance training is a type of exercise that uses resistance to build strength and muscle mass. Resistance training can be done with weights, bands, bodyweight, or machines. It involves movements that push, pull, and lift against the force of gravity or an external resistance. This type of training increases strength, power, and muscular endurance. It can also help improve balance, coordination, and flexibility.

In future articles we will delve into more specific topics that will help guide you and support your transformation.

Poland high up on CNN Travel list

The CNN Travel team has selected the best destinations to visit in 2023 and Poland is among them.

CNN writes that they could list new openings in Poland -- such as Hotel Verte, the new Autograph Collection property in Warsaw, which threw open its gilded doors (it's in a humongous Baroque palace) in August. But the reason you should visit Poland in 2023 isn't for the chance to stay in a place fit for royalty. It's to show solidarity with a country which has, in turn, shown solidarity to the people of Ukraine. CNN emphasized that sharing a 300-plus-mile border with a country under attack has

meant that Poland has taken in more Ukrainian refugees than anywhere else. Add to that plummeting tourist numbers (though they're on the rise again) and you have a tricky situation. So whether you fancy that Warsaw palace, a city break to the likes of Krakow, Gdansk, Wroclaw or Poznań - all hundreds of miles from the Ukrainian border or to get away from it all in the forests, lakes and mountains of the countryside - now's your chance to do some good by taking a vacation - writes CNN's Julia Buckley. After reaching a record level

of 21.2 million foreign tourists in Poland in 2019, the number of foreign tourists decreased, first

due to covid restrictions, then the war in Ukraine. According to OECD forecasts, the number of

foreign tourists in 2024 may approach the pre-pandemic level and exceed it in 2025.



In the heart of the Poprad Landscape Park you will find Modrzewita - wooden houses for rent located in truly beautiful surroundings, with vast meadows and forests and a picturesque panorama of the Radziejowa range and the Tatra Mountains and the Poprad gorge.

FAR FROM THE CROWD

When it comes to taking time off, some people prefer to visit winter resorts with wide-ranging ski offers, apres-ski bars and that unique sports atmosphere. Others are looking for places far from the crowd.

The owners of the place - Katarzyna and Sławomir Rutkowski found the location by accident.



"At the start of the 21st century we decided to settle down in Krynica Zdrój for a weekend/holiday. At that time, we had no idea that the apartment we bought had been built by the great-grandchildren of one of the Sicilian builders of the railway tunnel near Żegiestów," they say.

The tunnel is 514 meters long and is part of the most charming railway line in Poland leading through the Poprad valley to Krynica Zdrój. The uprising in Żegiestów was related to the accidental discovery by Ignacy Medwecki in 1846 of mineral water deposits - today, the waters are extracted from the springs Anna, Andrzej II, Żegiestów II and Zofia II.

Two wooden houses are made in ecological technology from lunar wood for up to four people each. They are surrounded by larches - symbols of health and longevity. Hence the name of our settlement - modrzew - larch in Polish and vita.

The owners encourage guests to take forest baths, which means

immersing all senses in nature. "Their essence is not to wander through the forest, but to perceive it and draw from it in every possible way: breathing the forest air, listening to the rustle of leaves, the wind, the chirping of birds, the sounds of animals. It is important to calm your thoughts, focus on the here and now. The art of calming down in nature is difficult to master, but it brings immeasurable benefits," say the owners of Modrzewita.



By practicing forest bathing, you not only contemplate nature, but also realize that you are part of it. The practice of forest bathing dates back to antiquity, and in Japan it was called shinrin-yoku.

The houses were made using the fully ecological technology of lunar wood and Steico, popularized by Erwin Thom, author of "The Secret Language of Trees," a famous Austrian forestry engineer who revolutionized thinking about trees and wood. For Thom, the forest is a complex ecosystem, a social and intelligent organism that remembers

millions of years of evolution. Trees, on the other hand, are a miracle of statics and architecture. Their design allows you to survive all the vagaries of the weather. The existence of lunar wood, as argued by Thom, was confirmed in research conducted by Professor Ernest Zürcher from the Federal University of Technology (ETH) in Zurich. Evidence that rooms built of this wood strengthen the work of the heart, improve its efficiency, have a calming effect on the pulse during sleep and strengthen the immune system, was presented by Professor Maximilian Moser from Graz.

Modrzewita focuses on comfort, convenience and relaxation. Each house has a Finnish tub with heated water, its own terrace and a gazebo in a quiet place.

The complex has its own internal brine graduation tower, a hammock, a bed, an outdoor kitchen for cooking enthusiasts and a winter garden. And around the forest, nature and sky.

"We tried to create the perfect place to relax - to be with ourselves, with our own thoughts, away from the hustle and bustle of big cities ... at the end of the world."



A hotel like no other

Verte Warsaw is the first Marriott Autograph Collection hotel in Poland. Distinguished by its unconventional adaptation of the Branicki and Szaniawski Palace, this boutique property is spectacularly seated in Warsaw's Old Town – right in the historical heart of the city. Built in the 18th century, designed by one of the most renowned Polish architects of the late Baroque, it fell into ruin during World War II. Fortu-

nately, nature abhors a vacuum and so does Warsaw. In the 1950s, the palace, like the entire city of Warsaw, was reconstructed. Today, open to new visitors, the palace is an architectural reconstruction of its images captured on canvases by Canaletto, painter and portraitist of Warsaw. The original palace design being uncertain, one thing is undeniable: a new page in the history of the building has just been opened.

Today, Verte Warsaw is a boutique hotel which perfectly resonates with contemporary trends and modern expectations, yet still, creating a beautiful symbiosis with the historical fabric of the city. In the immediate vicinity of the Old Town, right next to the National Theatre and Theatre Square, hotel Verte is a masterly blend of history and modernity. During reconstruction, the historical soul of the building was preserved without sacrificing what visitors to Verte will enjoy most – the effortless beauty of the property.

Once a place of elite meetings, today it is a space of warm and relaxed vibration. Hotel Verte opens up its interiors also for gourmands. The KUK restaurant serves healthy products from ver-

ified sources, seasonal dishes and intriguing food references to the history of the place. The menu is rich in culinary symbols of the city to the thrill of hotel guests and Warsaw residents alike.



Jarosław Uściński, Chef and owner of the MOONSFERA restaurant; President of the Polish Association of Chefs and Confectioners

CARNIVAL: SPEAKING OF TONGUES

We tend of course in Poland to associate carnival cuisine with the interwar period. So, what was eaten at such events then?

A largely forgotten piece of meat cooked and served with various sauces, a hot dish - tongue. Of course, tongue is great for connoisseurs of taste, either hot, e.g. with horseradish sauce, or cold, with horseradish or mustard.

Other cold cuts have been valued for years, like beef tartare. This used to be more popular than horsemeat. Delicious Warsaw-style pork chops, herring in many forms, but traditional in oil with onion or in sour cream with onion and apple. Pork legs in jelly. Or on its own with vegetables. These are real rarities and very healthy. The delicious vegetable salad that accompanies almost all events in Poland too.

Desserts should probably be mentioned too, although at carnival time they are not of such great importance. Sweets from the epoch include vanilla custard cream cleverly combined with whipped cream between baked flakes of puff pastry. Others, of course, include meringues with an infinite number of flavors, from coffee through raspberries and fruit to nuts and dried fruit to alcoholic liqueurs. The Adwokat liquor is the best in my opinion. There is always cheesecake and many cake forms that reigned at that time.

And what of snacks?

PORK LEGS

Ingredients:

- Pork knuckles 500 - 700 g
- Pork shanks 500 - 700 g
- Vegetables 1 large bunch
- Bay leaf - 5-7 leaves
- Allspice a few grains

- Black peppercorns - a few grains
- Salt to taste

Serve with:
Horseradish (optional) or spirit vinegar or apple vinegar. And a slice of delicious bread, a must with butter

Clean the knuckles and legs of any hairs, burning if necessary. Vegetables - i.e. celery, carrot, parsley, leek and cabbage - wash, clean and cut them into small pieces. Pour cold water in a pot with the pork knuckles and shanks. Add the leaf, herb and peppercorns and some salt. Not too much because it is easy to oversalt and the stock will evaporate. Cook over a very low heat for about three hours. After 2.5 hours the meat will be soft, but three hours is a guarantee that the collagen and other ingredients from the tissues penetrate the broth and cre-



ate their own jelly without the need to add gelatin. When three hours have passed (if necessary, add a little water to the decoction if it evaporates too much) and strain the ingredients on a fine sieve. Keep the stock in the pot. Separate the meat from the cubes and chop into pieces. Of the vegetables, leave only the carrot and cut it up. Add the chopped meat and carrot to the broth. Season with salt and pepper if needed. Pour into bowls

or glasses and, when cool, put in the fridge. When they set and become jelly, we get a wonderful snack. With a slice of bread with butter and vinegar or horseradish, it's simply delicious.

And at the end of the carnival, sweets reigning on the Polish dinner table are faworki and donuts. More about them next time.

Have a tasty and exuberant carnival



Marta Kalinowska
Hartwig

"I'll lose weight, join the gym, learn a new language" - Everyone knows all those New Year's resolutions by heart. This year, I'm going to do the opposite - I'll stop, and even go backwards. I will look back to recreate my future. In fashion and design, one of the strongest trends of the decade is reaching for things from the past. And it's not about inspiration, but literally about old objects. Artists, designers and even craftsmen massively offer things from years ago, just to give your interiors and wardrobes a modern touch.

Grandma's plate with contemporary graphics, shoes from the 80's that will make you look chic this carnival or maybe a men's jacket converted into a mini dress? And I'm not talking about eclecticism in combining objects, I mean their upcycling - altering, decorating and even changing their original purpose. A lot of such undertakings have recently been created in Poland. Hartwig's team selected a few of the most interesting ones. Woshwosh is the first company in Europe dealing



collages, as well as digitally processes her own photos. Her fashion can be found in editorials and music videos, and the juror of the Polish Feature Film Festival in Gdynia, Teoniki Rożynek, put Karina Custom on the red carpet, causing a sensation.

The obvious benefit of supporting zero-waste businesses is active participation in creating a closed circulation of items - against overconsumption and against mass production. It is also about paying attention to things with a history, looking at their fate.

Often the discovery is of interesting tales and anecdotes that they have to tell us. The older the item, the more interesting the stories. Thirdly, the coolest thing for me is bringing unique objects back to life. A dish found in a dumpster suddenly becomes the statement piece of our kitchen decor. It makes the interior original. The "old-new" sofa - with replaced upholstery or added legs turns out to be the most trendy piece of furniture.

Lastly, there is another, ephemeral thing, the unique value that Karina Śmiałek talks about - the authenticity of each of these items. "Upcycling gives me a sense of freedom and fulfillment and gives meaning to my life. I wish everyone such self-realization," adds the designer. I also subscribe to her words, let them be a fashion motto for 2023.



BACK TO THE FUTURE

Old for new, a zero waste step in 2023!

The obvious benefit of supporting zero-waste businesses is active participation in creating a closed circulation of items - against overconsumption and against mass production.

with footwear circularity, while Pico the Finder is an Instagram profile offering unique furniture. Joanna Arent-Williams, together with a friend, finds ceramics in the trash and decorates it with her own painting. Her brand Arent Plates has been appreciated

by the most important interior design magazines and design experts. Just like the photographer and fashion designer Karina Śmiałek, whose own brand deals with zero waste fashion. Karina Custom embellishes old clothes with embroidery, tassels and



WARSAW'S DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY SUPPORTS CHARITY

SHOM (Spouses of Heads of Mission), which brings together the diplomatic community of Warsaw, has held the International Charity Bazaar for the 15th time, this year at COS Torwar in Warsaw, with about 50 embassies and 20 foundations under the care of SHOM taking part.

photo credit: Malgorzata Giebultowicz

Each of the embassies wanted to show the best of their country. As every year, there was also a table representing Poland, offering beautiful Polish decorations and more. Residents of Warsaw were able to make unique gifts for Christmas and also buy original products for their Christmas tables.

The unique products from around the world tempted visitors, with jewelry, decorations, beautiful scarves, unique cosmetics just a small part of what could be purchased.

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In addition, visitors could try cuisine from around the world. The first floor of COS Torwar was dedicated to stands offering various dishes served by both embassy chefs and restaurants that serve their traditional dishes in Poland. Many times the delicacies were also prepared by the spouses of ambassadors. Colors, smells, the whole variety of cultures and customs created a unique atmosphere. There was also a raffle with unique prizes and silent auctions.

The entertainment program added to the wonderful atmosphere, with artists from Brazil, Armenia, India, Azerbaijan, Ukraine, France and Kazakhstan. The Polish team was impressive. Starting with the Mazowsze, Brass Orchestra from Nadarzyn, opera singer Aleksandra Szmyd, this time representing Poland Stefano Terazzino with his wonderful dancers.



But that's not all. Visitors were able to see professional fashion shows by four Polish designers: Kowalowe, Krystian Szymczak, Ewelina Szymańska and Ewa Zbaraszewska. The show was prepared and directed by Magdalena Rozenfeld together with Agnieszka Kozakiewicz. Beautiful models from the best Polish modeling agencies looked phenomenal in the clothes of these exceptional designers.

All the artists, show organizers and models devoted their time to enrich this beautiful event with their talent. They did it from the bottom of their good hearts. Without asking for anything in return.

Thanks to the generosity of the embassies, over 400,000 zlotys was collected. This sum will be divided among the 22 foundations that SHOM looks after. In previous issues of Poland Weekly readers have had a chance to get acquainted with the foundations that also came to the fair from almost all over Poland.

The fair was visited by approximately 5,000 people, not only from Warsaw. I met friends from Germany, Italy and the UK, also from Radom, Ciechanów and Kraków. Anyone who has visited the International Charity Bazaar once will not miss the next editions. So I already invite you for next year.





Poland through the eyes of foreigners

You've been living here for a long time and your Polish is perfect...

Well, it hasn't been perfect for that long /laugh/. Even though I started learning pretty much when I came here, it got really good just recently... A lot of foreigners have trouble learning Polish, but it happens to be particularly difficult for Asians. And it isn't a problem of difficulty of the language itself, as much as it is of a methodology, or rather the lack of it. There's just no good textbook. Most of them were written by the excellent Polish philologists, who just didn't consider who they are writing them for. You see, when you teach a language, you need to remember that the person on the other side is also learning the entirely different way of thinking.

So how did you manage to get this fluent?

There was so much I couldn't understand, the grammar made no sense to me (declension and all the exceptions) and no one was really answering my questions. So... At first, I just learnt by heart and then I was able to build up the fluency that allowed me to communicate and function well. With time, I understood more of how Polish language works but it wasn't a piece of cake. What's more, Poles are very nice and when you speak Polish they are always impressed, so they would never correct your mistakes. You keep your confidence, but on the other hand you also keep repeating your errors /laugh/. But seriously, I know a lot of people who gave up on Poland precisely because they couldn't learn the language and I really intend to use all my experience to help Asians with their education here. I'm actually working on a new textbook tailored especially for them.

When you first came to Poland you were a teenager. How do you remember your beginnings here?

My parents enrolled me and my big brother to school in Sosnowiec, in the South of Poland. At first, I was a very attractive company for my peers – the only one Asian in sight. I had a lot of support from teachers and people around me but still it was a difficult time for me. I was ashamed that I wasn't speaking Polish, I didn't want to make mistakes and so I was afraid to talk at all. In Vietnam, if you do or say something, you are expected to do it perfectly or at least very well - that's how

CULTURAL ASSISTANT WANTED

Tôn Vân Anh is a Vietnamese sociologist and activist cooperating with multiple Polish NGOs and working as a cultural assistant in public primary school in Warsaw. She is also the co-author of the book in Polish 'Xin chào! Vietnam for the inquisitive'. She moved to Poland 30 years ago with her parents, who fled the communist regime and sought a better future for their children.



I grew up. I also remember that it was very strange to me that the doors to apartments were always closed and that people



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seemed 'separated' from each other. What I remembered from Hanoi was this dynamic atmosphere and energy between people. The doors were only closed when no one was home. When people were back, they were actually leaving them open to let others know - 'You can come by if you want or need help. I'm here.' There were so many things I couldn't understand here and I had no one to ask. It was kind of a lonely time and maybe because of that experience, I do what I do now.

You are a cultural assistant at school. What does this role exactly entail?

It involves helping foreign pupils and their families in the adjustment to the new environment. It's pretty much every-

thing from supporting kids in everyday tasks and helping them understand every aspect of culture (even as small as putting their coat in the cloakroom), to administrative work and supporting their families with formal procedures that they need to follow. It's a relatively new profession here. Cultural assistants do work at schools in Poland already but only now the educational base for them is being created. I've actually just started my postgraduate Intercultural Assistance studies at Warsaw University. It's the first year of this faculty and I can really see that it's very much needed.

It seems that you've found your true calling and a perfect spot in a developing area...

Yes. I feel very passionate about what I do and I really feel I can be useful. I also cooperate with multiple NGOs here, such as La Strada or the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights. Recently I've created a small private education initiative called EduMix PlayButik promoting openness, free exploration and teaching based on the individual approach.

Do you recall the first time you truly felt that Poland is your place?

Yes - when I was granted Polish citizenship. My Vietnamese passport expired so I went to the Embassy to exchange it. In response I got a written statement from my own country saying that they did not recognize me as their own, because my actions harmed the nation of Vietnam. I was helping a lot of Vietnamese people through the human rights organizations in Poland and it turned out the regime already kept its eye on me. I was refused the new passport and without a valid travel document I wasn't even able to extend my stay in Poland. And then people around me made me realize that I qualify for the citizenship and that I should just apply. With the letters of support from all the organizations I was working with, I was granted Polish citizenship within two weeks. After 19 years it felt so good and really gave me peace. And it did change a lot the way I was thinking about myself here. Some of my friends say that it was also the time when I started speaking Polish fluently /laugh/.

How did the emigration and the change of citizenship shape your connection to your country?

Never in a million years had I imagined changing my citizenship. It had never crossed my mind before the whole passport crisis and I think it really had more to do with my relationship with Poland rather than Vietnam. I was born and I am Vietnamese, and now I'm also Polish, which makes me happy. And paradoxically, emigrating made my connection to Vietnam even stronger. Being Polish allows me to do a lot of work to help the Vietnamese people here and there. And for example, when I first came to Poland, I was able to watch movies about my country, that I would have never seen if still in Hanoi. So here I am free to ask and to know, to explore the truth about my country and be fully familiar with its history.

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