

MAGAZINE OF THE WAŁBRZYCH SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE "INVEST-PARK"

Among those who invested in Poland in 2016 alone:
Daimler, Toyota, LG, GE & Lufthansa

From the Publisher

Almost 140 foreign companies decided to invest in Poland last year. Special economic zones played an important role in this success. Their new tenants will spend almost EUR 3 billion – double the amount in 2015.

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Twenty years of experience in building relations with foreign investors at the Wałbrzych zone means that we know what entrepreneurs need.

As of the end of 2016, there were almost 40 new investment projects in the Wałbrzych zone. According to investors, their capital expenditure is set to reach EUR 0.8 billion, which will generate over 1,300 jobs and lead to increased demand for employees in their partners and suppliers.

The preferential conditions of conducting business activity, convenient location of plots, increasingly well developed and modern road and rail infrastructure, and access to a pool of qualified employees make Poland one of the most attractive destinations for investors in Europe. It is confirmed by Daimler's decision to construct a factory producing Mercedes-Benz engines in Jawor, or the newest projects of the Japanese corporation Toyota.

Twenty years of experience in building relations with foreign investors at the Wałbrzych



MACIEJ BADORA

PRESIDENT
OF THE WAŁBRZYCH
SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE

zone means that we know what entrepreneurs need. We are constantly doing our best to improve the quality of our services and assistance offered to investors. My personal experience

strengthens my conviction that foreign entrepreneurs attach particular importance to the high level of company culture, diligence and education of Polish employees, which translates into a growing number of research and development projects.

Innovativeness is among our greatest priorities. In practice it is achieved by building an ecosystem surrounding the zone, which shapes the relations between public, business and academic entities. We

have every reason to set ambitious goals for us and mark our presence in the international arena. The effects of twenty years of hard work have provided us with a stable foundation for fulfilling these aims.



The Wałbrzych Special Economic Zone "INVEST-PARK" is an area offering preferential conditions to investors in south-western Poland. Locating a business operation within the WSEZ makes the investor eligible for tax exemptions and a number of other forms of support from the company managing the zone.

ANNIVERSARY

WSSE "INVEST-PARK"



3,550
ha of land



53
subzones



200
companies



49,000
jobs



€5.8 billion
of capital expenditure



APRIL 2017 NO. 2/12

We listen closely to investors' needs

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WSSE INFO - Magazine of the
Wałbrzych Special Economic Zone
"INVEST-PARK"

Publisher:
Wałbrzyska Specjalna Strefa Ekonomiczna
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Wałbrzych Special Economic Zone

We listen closely

TO INVESTORS' NEEDS

Foreign investors appreciate our integrated and professional set of instruments, both financial and advisory. The quality of services offered by us encourages them to carry out ambitious and innovative projects in Poland - interview with Tadeusz Kościński, Deputy Minister of Development.

WSSE INFO: It has been twenty years since special economic zones were established in Poland. At the beginning of their functioning in the mid-1990s, the economic challenges were completely different than today. Have the zones passed the test? What is their role in the Responsible Development Plan?

TADEUSZ KOŚCIŃSKI: When they were established over twenty years ago, special economic zones had to face a very difficult task – combat structural unemployment, which was very high and still growing, reaching 40% in some areas. With the benefit of hindsight we could say that in spite of insufficient means, the zones did rise to the challenge. Their greatest asset was people – entrepreneurs who used the available forms of support and started business activity, which contributed

to increased employment and regional development. After twenty years we see that in order for a region to sustainably grow, economic zones can no longer be just vehicles for receiving income tax exemptions. The economic situation of the country and its regions has changed. Some problems remain, but there are also new challenges to overcome. This is why special economic zones should become a tool for a consistent investment policy aimed at intelligently and effectively attracting and supporting investors in the region. Only then will the zones be smoothly integrated into the national economic policy as presented in the Responsible Development Strategy. We would like to make the support instruments more available to Polish entrepreneurs. It does not mean that foreign firms will not be fairly treated – it is necessary to create conditions

devoid of artificial barriers that have so far prevented Polish companies from receiving public aid. Thus investment projects will be analyzed not only in terms of capital expenditure and the number of generated jobs, but also whether they involve transfers of technology to the regions and to Poland. We will strongly support projects which will lead to the establishment of R&D centers, cooperation between business and academia, and generation of well-paid jobs for specialists.

Last year, almost 140 foreign companies decided to invest in Poland. The zones are one of the incentives for investors, but tax exemptions and government grants are not the only magnet for international business. What sets Poland apart from other European locations?

Poland is gradually joining the ranks of innovation leaders – this is one of the principal aims we have set. The implementation of the Responsible Development Strategy includes a number of actions intended to create a business-friendly climate in Poland. What I mean in particular is the Business Constitution and the steadily growing number of solutions that facilitate doing business. All these initiatives address postulates put forward by entrepreneurs, which proves that we are able to carefully listen to the needs expressed by foreign investors. They appreciate our integrated and professional set of instruments, both financial and advisory. The quality of services offered by us encourages investors to carry out ambitious and innovative projects in Poland. Poland's attractiveness is also influenced by the active role of local administration and business environment institutions. We also maintain a good climate for investing, we are economically stable and we offer access to a pool of well-educated employees. These are just some of the factors that enable us to win the competition with other Central European states.

The government and your ministry stress the importance of the quality of jobs generated by investors. New projects should involve new technologies, which marks a departure from an economic model based on assembling in favor of innovative solutions. This “new qual-

ity” is exemplified by the construction of a Daimler factory in the Jawor subzone of the Wałbrzych Special Economic Zone. What makes this project special? Is it the beginning of a new investment trend?

Daimler AG's investment in a plant producing petrol and diesel engines is unique on a European scale. It confirms that the car industry is becoming an innovation hub for the Polish economy. It is also a good example of a capital-intensive project which results in the creation of high-value-added jobs and which economically activates a part of Lower Silesia. I



have no doubt that the German corporation's investment will act as a catalyst for further foreign investment in Poland. Suffice it to mention just a few projects that we have managed to attract in the last months: LG Chem, Toyota, or Xeos, a joint venture of GE Aviation and Lufthansa

“ We will strongly support projects which will lead to the establishment of R&D centers, cooperation between business and academia, and generation of well-paid jobs for specialists.

Technik. All these investment projects make Poland's economy even more competitive on a global scale. Due to the transfer of know-how, they also contribute to the development of firms with Polish capital.

The development of industry is accompanied by the development of infrastructure, especially transport. Daimler's decision shows that a global corporation does not necessarily have to base its activities in a large agglomeration. By providing adequate access by road or rail, it is possible to establish cooperation with suppliers and academics and quickly reach foreign markets. How would you describe Poland's attractiveness against this background?

Significant investment in road and rail network in the next few years will make it possible to “open up” new places on Poland's map of investment. Areas that have previously been excluded due to inadequate transport infrastructure will become attractive destinations for investors. We already see their increased interest, especially in eastern Poland. At a time of fast-changing trends, geographical location is one of the chief factors

determining the investment attractiveness of any country. Due to its location, Poland may be an attractive destination for European firms that need to quickly react to the changing market trends. As a result of its size, Poland offers the advantage of being able to cater to different needs of investors, who consider different criteria while selecting the investment site.

Poland boasts a large number of IT specialists and engineers. How can this potential be used for the benefit of the Polish economy and how to encourage Polish and foreign companies to invest in innovative project in the so-called industry 4.0?

Poland is known all over the world for the high level of IT education, and for this reason many international companies are situating R&D centers here. Domestic firms are also strengthening their position by creating R&D centers and hiring young graduates of technical schools. There are currently 1.5 million students in Poland, and a quarter of them are pursuing science and IT education. This proportion has been steadily growing and this trend is expected to continue in the next few years. It largely stems from the rich offer of Polish universities and their increasing openness to cooperation with business. Foreign investors are aware of it while making the decision to open their branches in Poland, where they have access to highly qualified and young employees. We support projects which are based on advanced processes requiring the involvement of highly-qualified specialists, in which the investor is ready to cooperate with higher education institutions. Those ventures in which there is a real transfer of knowledge between the partners are most desirable. It is undoubtedly important for us to help universities adapt their offer to market needs, particularly in the IT sector, which we consider to be a priority for us. The coordination of support for pro-development investment projects is ensured by the Polish Development Fund, which offers assistance to young entrepreneurs at the beginning of their professional careers in the form of venture capital mechanisms. Tech start-ups need mentorship of bigger partners. This solution, based on state-owned companies, is used in the government's program Start in Poland, which is the biggest accelerator in Central and Eastern Europe. Moreover, the Industrial

Transformation Team at the Ministry of Development is involved in the preparation of The Green Book on the Polish Platform “Industry 4.0” and the documents needed to launch it. The platform will serve the role of a national integrator responsible for the digital transformation of Poland’s industry.

Apart from skilled engineers, investors also need access to people with practical skills. These needs are addressed by the changes in the educational system. Can the system be reformed by the introduction of professional schools, participation of entrepreneurs in the educational process and the active involvement of special economic zones?

The changes introduced in vocational education have been received very positively by employers and students alike. The changing economic reality, in particular in the labor market, forces us to constantly adapt education to employers’ needs. As a result, we have recently

” Poland is gradually joining the ranks of innovation leaders – this is one of the principal aims we have set.

announced in the Wałbrzych Special Economic Zone that we have decided to support the new educational policies in vocational schooling. The reform proposed by the Ministry of National Education is based on solidifying the position of entrepreneurs in the new model of education. Active participation of special economic zones in the educational process will contribute to solving problems with finding the right personnel, which is faced by some companies. It can also become another incentive affecting investors’ decisions about conducting projects in Poland.

Lifting the sanctions on Iran has opened up new cooperation opportunities for Poland. The establishment of posts in Vietnam and Indonesia and the strengthening of relations with China and India

means that we are looking for markets to expand outside the European Union. What can cooperation with the Middle and Far East lead to? Will it translate into a greater number of Asian investment projects in Poland?

We are constantly looking for new growth opportunities for Polish entrepreneurs. We create a favorable climate for doing business, also in places which are far away from Poland. Although the broadly-defined Asian market is not an easy destination, it offers huge perspectives. We are building a network of Trade Offices in order to open these markets to Polish products. We have noticed a significant increase of Asian investors’ interest in our market. In 2016 alone, it translated into a number of investment projects in Poland carried out by companies such as LG Chem (Korea), Toyota (Japan), Mabuchi Motor (Japan), Tex Year (Taiwan), Hongbo Clean Energy (China) or Everbright (China). Moreover, in October 2016 we finalized the agreement with Taiwan on avoiding double taxation. The successful conclusion of this agreement will bring tangible benefits to investors in both countries, especially in terms of attracting Taiwanese investments based on high technology. Lifting the sanctions on the Iranian market has also brought new opportunities for Polish entrepreneurs, in particular those operating in the food and agricultural industry, mining, construction, IT, machines production or textile manufacturing. ■



Growing in harmony with the environment

***Eiji Takeichi**, President of Toyota Motor Manufacturing Poland in Wałbrzych and Jelcz-Laskowice, on new investment projects and the functioning of the Japanese corporation in Poland.*

WSSE INFO: This year marks the 15th anniversary of launching production by Toyota Motor Manufacturing Poland in Wałbrzych. This is one of Toyota's largest factories producing car parts outside Japan. Has the decision to locate the factory in Wałbrzych met your expectations? With the benefit of hindsight, was it the right decision?

EIJI TAKEICHI: The greatest asset of any manufacturing facility is its workers, and the plant in Wałbrzych is known for its high quality of work. The employees are highly skilled and

diligent. This is exactly the kind of people who are needed in industrial production. I also notice similarities between Polish and Japanese culture, which is an additional advantage. Based on these observations, I believe that this factory can potentially become one of Toyota's largest manufacturing facilities in the world. Toyota Motor Manufacturing Poland was set up in 1999, and as early as 2002 we launched the production of first car subassemblies – five-gear manual transmissions. Soon afterwards we expanded the range of manufactured parts. In 2005 a decision was made to make 1.0-liter engines and compatible transmissions. In 2008, the



After the merger of the factories in Wałbrzych and Jelcz-Laskowice, TMMP has become one of Toyota's largest centers producing car components outside Japan.

factory started to produce another type of manual transmissions, with six gears. In 2018 we are going to begin the production of transmissions for hybrid vehicles. This brief overview shows that Toyota is increasingly committed to its presence in the region. Of course, production volumes depend on market demand, but our steady growth proves that the decision to locate our facility in Poland was correct.

You have mentioned that the factory in Wałbrzych is planning to increase its volume of production. Toyota has also decided to introduce the production of a new type of engine in Jelcz-Laskowice. What factors influenced these decisions?

Toyota's production and sales strategy is based on the principle that if a particular kind of vehicle is in high demand in a given region, we try to locate factories where its components are made as closely as possible. So far in Poland we have been producing manual gearboxes, petrol engines and diesel engines in Jelcz-Laskowice. These products addressed the needs of the European market. Nowadays Toyota is planning to increase the sales of hybrid vehicles in this part of the world. As a result, we are launching the production of the new TNGA engines and hybrid transmissions. We follow three main principles when making the decision about choosing the location. First we look at how stable the environment is, in particular in terms of sociopolitical condi-

tions. We want to be certain that they are stable enough to invest and begin production. Then we analyze whether there is access to employees with the right skills – we take into account both their qualifications and the model of relationship between employees and employers. Finally we check if it is possible to set up a competitive plant or assembly lines. We perceive competitiveness not only from the angle of low production costs, but also in terms of occupational safety, efficiency and quality. Once these factors have been analyzed, the company makes the decision about launching new projects. The local factories have met our expectations. The history of Toyota in Poland also proves that it is possible to successfully cooperate with the local self-government, which is another factor influencing our decisions.

Will Toyota's new projects involve the use of innovative processes and technologies?

The technology behind hybrid transmissions and their production originated in Japan. The first foreign factory where these subassemblies are made was opened in China. Thus Poland will be the third country where these units will be produced. The history of Toyota's hybrid drives is relatively long. A lot of time was needed before the company perfected the product, tested it in practice and launched it. We wanted to be certain that it would be an important advantage of our company. We believe that hybrid technology can

be linked with plug-in hybrid vehicles and alternative solutions, fuel cell vehicles. I think that by introducing our innovative technologies to Poland we do the groundwork for their future development and implementation of other solutions that will address the challenges faced by the car industry.

Starting in 2018, TMMP's factory in Wałbrzych will also perform research functions. What will they focus on?

Launching the production of subassemblies for hybrid vehicles is connected with the necessity of training engineers who will be responsible for quality. Although the components will be initially imported from Japan, in the long term we would like to base production on the so-called localization, i.e. using local suppliers of elements needed in the manufacturing process. In order to do so, we must train personnel who would possess the required knowledge of the market, be capable of performing quality checks and able to inform the suppliers about how to make elements meeting our expectations. This is the only way that will enable us to rely on local producers.

The expansion of factories is connected with the need to train not only engineers, but also workers on the shop floor. For many years you have been cooperating with local technical schools. What is Toyota's role in the process of supporting education?

One of the main elements of Toyota's strategy is growing in harmony with the environment. The company and its sur-

roundings affect each other. Supporting schools by Toyota is primarily aimed at increasing the level of teaching technical knowledge. Consequently, we provide equipment to educational institutions – for example, at the very beginning of our presence in Wałbrzych we donated a professional CNC cutting machine to a local school, and later we provided it with models of engines and gearboxes as well as two test cars. We also run a program of apprenticeships and work training at our facility. This is how we contribute to the development of the region, and I believe it is mutually beneficial. By supporting education we have more competent workers. These workers influence the stability of the region and, as I said, this aspect is vitally important when we decide where to locate another investment project.

For many years Toyota has been actively involved in CSR initiatives. What benefits does the company derive from actions addressed to the local community?

The principles of doing business in a responsible way are identical with the Toyota Way, which has been an element of the company's DNA since its early days. Therefore, as I have just said, one of Toyota's principles is developing hand in hand with the local community. We are most active in those spheres where we can share our expertise – environmental protection, road safety or technical education. We also conduct an annual survey of local people's preferences regarding which spheres of life should be supported by local companies. This is another reason why we are involved in social and educational projects as well as initiatives promoting sport and a healthy lifestyle. ■

Examples of Toyota's actions in the region

• Toyota Fund – Ideas that Change Our World

Grants for non-profit organizations conducting small-scale revitalization projects

• ZielonyWałbrzych.pl

An internet portal for the inhabitants of Wałbrzych with information about the environment and pro-environmental solutions for the home

• PoMOC z Toyoty – support for volunteers

Grants for Toyota employees wishing to carry out projects in their local communities

• Safe Driver

Program improving the driving skills of local people, a competition and social campaigns

• TOYOTA Basketball League

Year-long basketball competition for primary and middle school students

• TOYOTA Half-marathon Wałbrzych

Co-organization of the half-marathon

Support of local sports clubs and cultural institutions.



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THE POTENTIAL

We want the Jawor plant to be a benchmark for the sector and a starting point for further development in the automobile industry - Dr. Andreas Schenkel, President of the Board of Mercedes-Benz Manufacturing Poland, on the decision to locate the factory in Lower Silesia

WSSE INFO: Seven sites were considered as possible locations for Mercedes' new factory. Which aspects were decisive in selecting Jawor and the Lower Silesian Economic Activity Zone as the first production site of Mercedes-Benz Cars in Poland?

DR. ANDREAS SCHENKEL: Our investment here is part of Mercedes-Benz's global strategy of increased passenger car sales. 2016 was the fourth record year in a row for Mercedes-Benz in Poland and Mercedes-Benz has increased sales in Poland by more than 40% in comparison with the previous year. We're on our way to a good result in 2017 as well. Daimler AG's selection of sites for new factories is based on key criteria such as location, dimensions of the parcel, existing infrastructure, logistics, the ability to establish a network of partner companies and sub-suppliers, the availability of a properly trained workforce, as well as support from national and local authorities. In this context, Jawor's location in Lower Silesia was our best choice - we see a tremendous amount of potential here. Additionally, the proximity to the Kölleda "sister-factory" in Thuringia, Germany, will allow close cooperation between the two plants.

Preparing this type of an investment project requires many months of analyses, negotiations and decision making. The success of these efforts depended in large part on a positive investment environment and the support of Polish partners. What are your impressions of the work that went into this project? Did the process match your expectations?

Poland is a country full of potential and it has a great deal to offer to foreign investors. Poland's biggest advantages are the macroeconomic factors, a well-developed workforce as well as material resources. Also, the environment for business activities continues to get better every year. That's evidenced not only by international rankings such as the World Bank's Doing Business 2017, but can also be seen in the regional and local governments' positive attitude and the engagement of institutions supporting foreign investors. In a project as complex and complicated as ours, even the optimization of

its size and shape and obtaining the necessary permits can be a challenge. In Poland, however, we were able to find partners who were fully prepared to take on these types of challenges and were determined to find the optimal solutions for everyone involved. Thanks to the local government's willing attitude and the efforts of the special economic zone staff, the project's preparatory work was conducted in a very positive and highly professional manner.

You have been at Daimler for more than two decades. Prior to becoming the CEO of Mercedes-Benz Manufacturing Poland you worked at the Untertürkheim plant near Stuttgart. What does this new role mean for you?

I began my career at the then DaimlerChrysler AG in 1996, as a management trainee at the Untertürkheim engine plant near Stuttgart. Since then, I have held various management positions within the production organization of Mercedes-Benz Cars. Prior to becoming the CEO of Mercedes-Benz Manufacturing Poland I was in charge of chassis produc-

Poland is a country full of potential and it has a great deal to offer to foreign investors.

tion planning at the Untertürkheim factory. Since the engine plant in Jawor will be the company's first site in Poland, I am grateful that my supervisors entrusted me with such a fascinating challenge. We are always guided by our "The best or nothing" motto and I know that making it a reality here will require not only enthusiasm but also plenty of hard work - which I will do my best to accomplish.

The investment in the Jawor facility is expected to exceed 500 million euros. The factory will not simply be an engine assembly plant but will incorporate the latest manufacturing technologies associated with what's been called the fourth industrial evolution. Could you explain this concept?

The Mercedes factory will utilize the most up-to-date technologies which will ensure the safe, effective and environmentally conscious production of engines. We want the Jawor plant to be a benchmark for the sector and a starting point for further development in the automobile industry. The Jawor factory will manufacture technologically advanced four cylinder gasoline and diesel engines for cars across the company's entire range: from the smallest A-Class to the S-Class limousines.

The plant will employ approximately 500 workers and the recruitment process is due to begin late in 2017. What types of specialist will you be looking to hire?

We are looking to hire engineers and other university graduates as well as production-line workers. At this point we have completed the first stage of establishing our new company's structures: assembling a local human resources team. We are currently recruiting candidates for our financial and legal services teams. We will seek to fill the remaining positions at the end of 2017 and in 2018. All employment opportunities are posted in the "Careers"/"Kariera" section of the Jawor plant's website www.mercedes-benz-jawor.com.pl. Anyone interested in employment at our company can learn about the recruitment plans and find current job openings.

The factory's operations will require not only employees but also products and services. Can you estimate the plant's impact on the local and national economy and on the development of new relationships with suppliers and sub-suppliers?

Poland's workforce is one of the main factors driving the country's ability to attract foreign investments. The highly skilled, productive and loyal Polish labor force was a significant factor in our decision to locate our plant here. Our experiences with production facilities around the world prove that these kinds of investments substantially contribute to a region's economic growth by stimulating entrepreneurship, creating new and sought-after employment opportunities and driving the local population's professional development. The plant in Jawor is expected to directly create about 500 jobs. It can be estimated that each one of these positions will generate additional jobs in the region - at supplier and sub-supplier companies as well as with service providers. At this point, we are creating our local human resources team. Our investment will also have a positive impact on the job market through our investment in human capital. We anticipate that highly-skilled employees from our German plants

will provide job training programs for our future Polish workforce. We want to share our technological innovation, organization and modern management methods and know-how. This will have a positive impact on the productivity of the local economy. We can also expect that our project will provide the spark for developing relationship networks among domestic suppliers and sub-suppliers. That's a very important element of creating a complete economic value chain and improving the quality of goods and services on the market.

The demand for these skills means not only looking for the right employees on the job market but also calls for involvement in the training of potential future employees so that school graduates have the skills to meet your company's needs. Is Mercedes planning to become involved with local schools and perhaps apply the German dual education system experience in Poland?

In addition to ongoing recruitment efforts we are taking part in discussions with local government authorities and the relevant institutions regarding our recruitment needs and our future employees' professional profiles, competences and skills. We are also discussing our future educational efforts targeting the region's pupils and teachers. An important part of these discussions is the organization and development of a local vocational education system and ensuring that graduates of the county's schools have the skills and abilities which reflect the evolving needs of the local job market, as characterized by new investments like



As we've said all along, we want to actively participate in the life of our local community.

ours. However, creating a detailed plan for our educational efforts in the region requires additional time and further discussions with our local partners - so I'd like to ask you for some more patience. I can assure you that we will continue to provide you with thorough and up-to-date information on this subject.

Daimler is a prime example of embracing the concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR). While the construction of the factory is still in its early stages -



The plant is being built in the Lower Silesian Economic Activity Zone, which is covered by the WSEZ

Mercedes has already been involved in local initiatives such as the Christmas market and an exhibition about the company's past and future. To what extent does the company plan to involve itself in the region's community and cultural life?

As we've said all along, we want to actively participate in the life of our local community. Our "Welcome to the Mercedes-Benz family" project includes numerous efforts designed to develop close and direct relationships with the region's residents – even before the factory's opening and the launch of production. One of the campaign's elements was the inauguration of the "Jawor - A new chapter in the history of Mercedes Benz" multimedia exhibition which introduced local residents to our company's 130 year tradition of innovation and technological achievement. While we invite everyone to visit the Mercedes-Benz Museum in Stuttgart, the exhibition in Jawor was our company's first event of its kind in the world. That's why we're so happy that the exhibition drew more than 200 visitors on its first weekend. We hope that our exhibition will become Jawor's venue for exploring and discussing the history of science and technology – a subject that is somewhat neglected in school curricula. I would be very proud if our exhibition inspires pupils to further develop their technical abilities and one day perhaps pursue a career at our factory.

Mercedes has launched a portal dedicated to its investment in Jawor. What are the website's goals and target audience?

In planning the construction of our new facility in Jawor, one of our priorities was establishing a platform for providing the local community with information about the project. That's the original idea behind the dedicated website. One of our primary goals was to create a service which would grow and evolve along with the factory. Also, we wanted to establish a single source of information about all of our business, cultural and community activities and efforts for the region's residents, local organizations and media. As I've mentioned earlier, an important element of the website is the "Career" section which will list all of our job openings. Additionally, it will also be the place to learn interesting facts about the facility as well as current information about Mercedes-Benz's ongoing activities. ■



PLESZEW

A town open to investors



There are 8 ha of land allocated to business activity in the town and gmina of Pleszew. Investors can also locate their ventures in another 5 ha covered by the Wałbrzych Special Economic Zone. Conducting business activity within the WSEZ makes the investor eligible for public aid in the form of income tax exemptions.

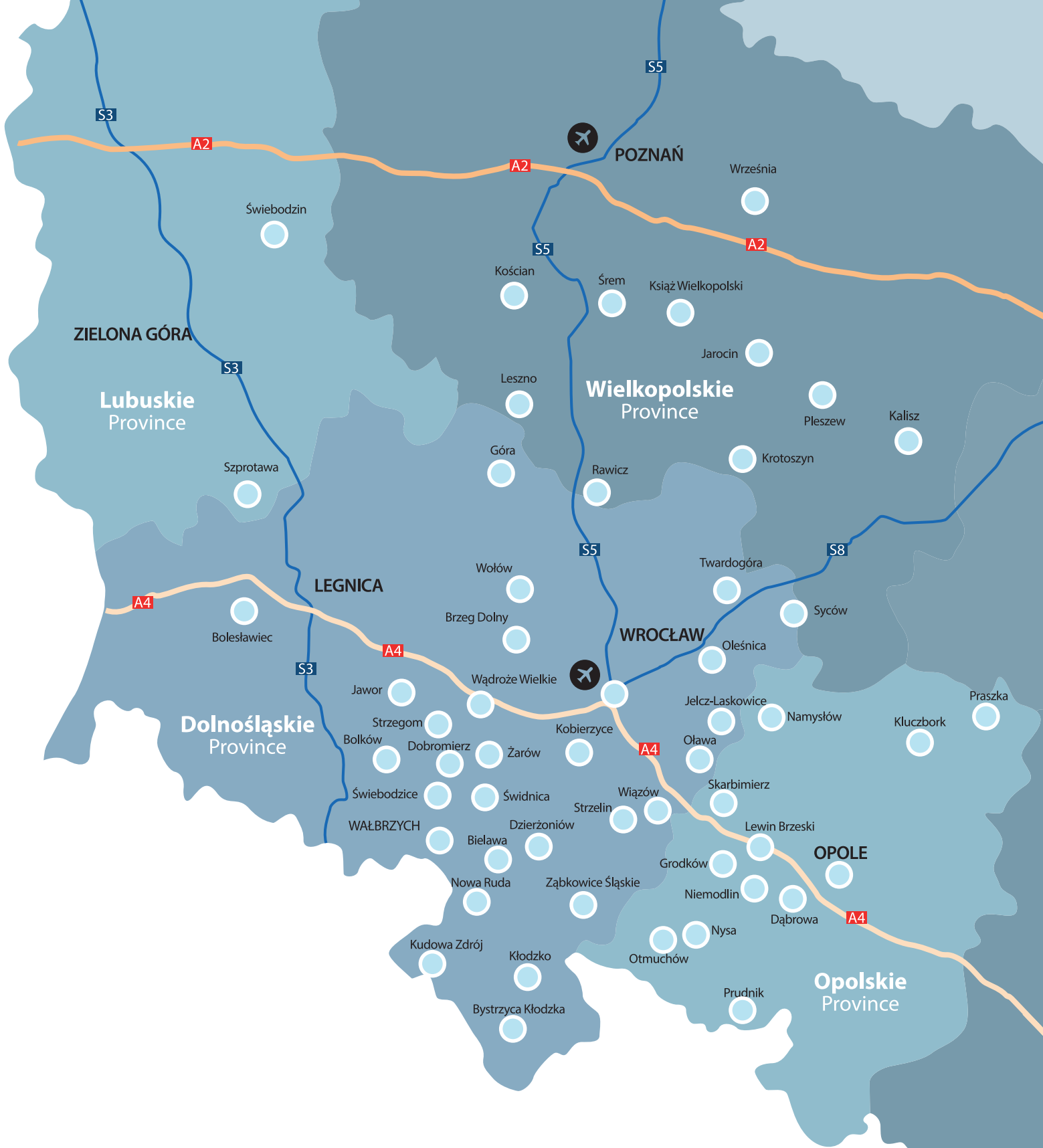
Pleszew is a charming town on the Ner river, in the south of Wielkopolskie Province. It lies 90 km from Poznań, which is the capital of the region, and around 50 km from an interchange with the A2 Motorway. The gmina is inhabited by over thirty thousand people. The town boasts a rich recreational offer and an attractive array of catering and hotel services. With its history going back over 730 years, Pleszew is able to combine tradition and modernity in economy, education, environmental protection, culture and sport.

Pleszew was one of the pioneers in the process of integration with Europe. In the 1990s, the town signed a partnership agreement with Spangenberg in Germany, and soon afterwards it established cooperation with St. Pierre d'Oleron in France, Morlanwelz in Belgium and Westerstede in Germany. Today it is a thoroughly European town.

Pleszew is known for the production of central heating boilers and gardening, especially greenhouse tomatoes. Local craftsmanship is also well developed, with leathercraft and saddlery specialists renowned all over Europe. The town is also the seat of a company producing machines for the food industry, which are exported to Asia and America. FAMOT, another Pleszew-based company with German and Japanese capital, makes specialist machine tools used all across the world. The company also operates a training center and a sales outlet from which these machines are sold to Eastern Europe.



CHECK OUT THE
AVAILABILITY OF LAND FOR
INVESTING IN PLESZEW



MAP OF SUBZONES of the Wałbrzych Special Economic Zone



Check out the interactive
map on the Internet



Professional *means* comprehensive

TEXT: Michał Szukała, Deputy President of the Wałbrzych Special Economic Zone

A rich offer of land and tax exemptions for investors are not the only advantages of doing business in the Wałbrzych zone. Our reliability has been tested by foreign partners in the last 20 years of coordinating investment processes and supporting the tenants.

THE INVESTMENT PROCESS does not begin at the moment of “digging the first spade” for the construction of a new plant. This stage is preceded by many studies and analyses, negotiations, contracts preparations and obtaining the necessary permits. This procedure may seem daunting, particularly for foreign investors who are not experienced in navigating their way through Polish legal regulations.

OVER THE TWO DECADES of its functioning, the Wałbrzych zone has helped almost 100 large compa-

nies with foreign capital, such as international automotive corporations and household names connected with the production of domestic goods and food. It means that we have gathered the necessary experience in supervising big investment projects, which entail the involvement of expert teams appointed by the investor, our zone, local self-governments, the Ministry of Development and the Polish Investment and Trade Agency. When so many parties are involved in a big project, reaching agreement can take months. Keeping the deadlines is possible only when each player is fully committed to the project. Our effectiveness stems from the knowledge of regulations, good contact with self-government units and utility providers, and the ability to find the best service providers. Whenever it is necessary, we help in project coordination by acting as an intermediary between the investor and the external entities at all stages of the process.

INVESTMENTS IN THE WSEZ



The Wałbrzych zone received the commendation of the fDi Magazine for its comprehensive and high-quality services to entrepreneurs

100



**LARGE
foreign tenants**



170



**investment
PROJECTS**



**€5.2
BILLION**



**of capital
EXPENDITURE**

THE COMPANY MANAGING THE WSEZ HAS ALSO PLAYED A CRUCIAL ROLE in the work connected with the establishment of entire investment complexes, known as Economic Activity Zones. These areas are dedicated to a strategic investor as well as its potential partners and suppliers. Currently we manage two such zones. The first one is the Września Economic Activity Zone in Wielkopolskie Province, where Volkswagen's factory is located. The other one is created in the gminas of Jawor and Męcinka, where the construction of a Mercedes-Benz plant is about to begin. Both zones are characterized by excellent location, access to utilities and, first and foremost – the proximity of the German motorization giants.

IMPORTANTLY, WE ALSO SUPPORT our tenants after the construction of their plants has finished. We offer assistance in finding skilled workers and reliable

business partners. We organize training sessions, conferences and trade fairs. Companies which function within the zone can also join a cluster or a bulk purchase group, which decreases their utility bills. We do our best to quickly react to the tenants' needs and help them overcome any barriers which they may encounter.

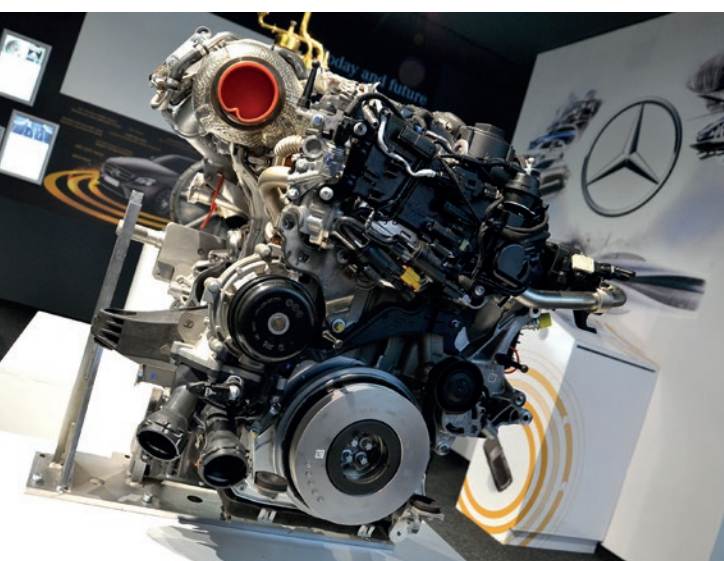
THUS OUR SERVICE does not come down to selling plots of land. The quality and comprehensive character of our support is appreciated both by entrepreneurs and by international reports. It is an important element in the incentive package offered to foreign companies, which significantly increases Poland's attractiveness. ■



rozwiązań jest
nie ciekawsze
wanie.

A NEW CHAPTER IN THE HISTORY OF

MERCEDES



"By opening the exhibition we would like to greet Jawor as a new member of the Mercedes-Benz Cars family and the entire network of drive components producers. The new factory will be an important link in the global group of our plants, providing us with the heart of any vehicle – the engine. Thus we are not only situating a tangible investment project in Poland – we are also sharing 130 years of experience of Germany's best manufacturing facilities," **Frank Deiss**, Head of Production Powertrain Mercedes-Benz Cars, said during the meeting.

The multimedia exhibition titled *Jawor – A New Chapter in the History of Mercedes-Benz* is an invitation to visit the company's universe which will be appreciated not only by car lovers.



-BENZ

Among the attractions is a replica of the first high speed petrol engine, which was constructed in 1884 by Gottlieb Daimler and Wilhelm Maybach and used in the first model of the motorcycle. The visitors will also see the ultramodern OM 654 engine – the crowning achievement in the production of diesel engines. Part of the display is permanent while the other part features exhibits that will be changed as the investment progresses.

"I'm very happy to be able to follow the construction work that will begin this June. Poland is very important to our company, as demonstrated by the record number of new cars sold in 2016. Compared with the previous year, sales increased by 40%," said **Dr. Andreas Schenkel**, President of Mercedes-Benz Manufacturing Poland. The exhibition area will ultimately serve as a meeting place for the local community, especially children

A MULTIMEDIA EXHIBITION DEVOTED TO THE BRAND OF MERCEDES-BENZ HAS OPENED IN THE REGIONAL MUSEUM IN JAWOR. A PART OF THE DISPLAY FOCUSES ON THE COMPANY'S PLANT THAT WILL BE BUILT IN THE WAŁBRZYCH SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE.



Dr. Andreas Schenkel,
President of the Board of Mercedes-Benz Manufacturing Poland

and teenagers who want to find out more about the history and future of motorization, science and technology.

"We want to establish permanent contact with the inhabitants of the region in which our investment project is situated. We hope that this exhibition will create a space, a point on the map of Jawor, where people will be able to meet up and talk about the history of science and technology, which is somewhat lacking in school curricula. We have trained the personnel of the Regional Museum and they are most willing to answer any questions in this area," said **Dr. Ewa Łabno-Fałęcka**, Head of Communications and Public Relations at Mercedes-Benz Manufacturing Poland. ■



Special economic zones in the new model of

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Representatives of companies managing special economic zones in Poland discussed the ways of supporting investors in their search for skilled workers and adapting education to the needs of employers. The meeting, which was held in the Wałbrzych Special Economic Zone, was attended by Minister of National Education **Anna Zalewska** and **Grażyna Ciurzyńska** of the Investment Policy Department, who represented the Ministry of Development.

For twenty years, special economic zones have been an effective instrument for stimulating Poland's economic growth. In almost every county there are sites covered by one of the zones. The total capital expenditure of all the tenants has reached almost PLN 120 billion, and almost 280,000 people have found jobs thanks to them.

According to surveys conducted by the zones, entrepreneurs' demand for particular kinds of employees has necessitated changes in the educational system. Companies are looking for engineers as well as cutting machine operators, electricians,

mechanics, electromechanics and automation specialists. The tenants' recruitment plans for the next few years will result in the creation of over a dozen thousand jobs connected with these professions. New jobs will also be generated by companies functioning in the broadly-defined business environment of the tenants as cooperators or suppliers, which is also bound to increase the demand for specialists.

The meeting in Wałbrzych was devoted to discussions about actions that will support companies in their search for skilled



KRZYSZTOF DRYNDA

Deputy President of the Wałbrzych Special Economic Zone "INVEST-PARK" in charge of the functioning of clusters

WSSE INFO: How did entrepreneurs react to the changes in the vocational education system that were proposed by the Ministry of Education?

Krzysztof Drynda: One of the main factors influencing the decision to begin a new investment project is the availability of human capital, i.e. potential employees. Entrepreneurs who conduct business in special economic zones repeatedly make the point that although finding the right managers and engineers does not pose problems, there exists a lack of employees with certain technical skills. Finding a solution to this problem requires systemic actions. It is absolutely necessary to introduce the new professional schools and lift the "curse" on vocational education. The new system will enable young people to pursue higher education while providing them with a possibility of quickly obtaining professional qualifications. Last year we conducted a survey of entrepreneurs' recruitment needs in the next five-six years. This knowledge can be used by students who must decide on their future career paths because it provides information about which jobs will be in demand at the moment of their graduation. The survey has also revealed an increased demand for higher technical education. It means that the Polish industry will develop towards the new technologies and greater automation of industrial processes. Equipped with this knowledge, it is possible to predict the trends in the labor market for university graduates and avoid some of the future problems.

The ongoing changes affect the principles of the dual system of education, not only at the secondary level.

This is true. What we see here is government policies directed towards the needs of the economy, which is confirmed by entrepreneurs. The changes do not concern just the introduction of professional schools, but also the cooperation of scientists and businesspeople at universities and, going a step further, the so-called implementation doctorates, i.e. the dual system at the academic level. Poland is turning towards business and asking the question: Which specialists are needed for business to successfully function and develop? Establishing a dialog with the economic environment and adapting education at all levels to the requirements of the labor market is definitely the right direction. All these actions at the intersection of education, science and business make Poland even more attractive to investors.

In this dialog, what is the role of special economic zones and the educational clusters run by them?

The clusters are the right place to analyze the recruitment needs of entrepreneurs. Over 200 companies function in the Wałbrzych zone alone, which covers areas in south-western Poland. By compiling data from all the fourteen zones we are able to get the full picture of demand for concrete professions across the whole country, which can be useful in introducing systemic changes. For example, if entrepreneurs need several thousand machine tool operators, it does not necessarily mean that they are needed everywhere – perhaps just in areas where concrete types of industrial production are present. This mechanism will enable young people to remain near their hometowns because they will be able to find jobs reflecting their qualifications. It will also prevent the accumulation of human capital in large agglomerations to the detriment of smaller towns, which is one of the elements of the sustainable development policy.

workers. The role of educational clusters established by the zones will be very important in this respect. They currently gather around 300 entities such as companies, schools, local governments and other business environment institutions. The clusters facilitate cooperation between schools and entrepreneurs by offering apprenticeships and training programs, conducting research projects in collaboration with universities, supporting students' associations and providing equipment that will be used as teaching aids. One of the most efficient forms of cooperation is classes sponsored by companies func-

tioning in the zones. Over 100 of them have been created in the last two years.

Representatives of special economic zones signed a declaration supporting the Ministry of Education's new policies in regard to vocational education. The changes are based on strengthening the position of entrepreneurs in the new schooling model and the creation of two-stage professional schools that will replace today's vocational schools. ■



The cornerstone for the construction of the plant in Opole was laid by You Yuxian, owner of the Hongbo group, and Zhou Lianqing, Deputy Governor of Fujian Province and Member of the Fujian Provincial Committee of the Communist Party of China.

CHINA EVER CLOSER TO POLAND

The establishment of a network of trade offices and the direct train connection between Chengdu and Łódź – dubbed the New Silk Route – bring Poland closer to the Middle Kingdom. The tightening of relationships is also manifested in an increased interest of Chinese investors in Central and Eastern Europe.

In 2016, the first investor with Chinese capital decided to construct a factory in the Wałbrzych Special Economic Zone. Hongbo Clean Energy decided to carry out an investment project worth PLN 80 million in Opole. The company, which is listed on the Chinese stock exchange, will erect a facility producing LED lighting systems.

"Thanks to its location, Poland is a bridge linking Eastern and Western Europe. For China, it is a 'window' on Europe, and the currently conducted project of the New Silk Route adds to its advantages," said **Yuxian You**, the owner of the Hongbo group. "We have considered locating the project in Germany, France, Greece or the Czech Republic. Our decision was ultimately influenced by the attractiveness of the site and good cooperation with the Wałbrzych zone and the local government," emphasized **Zixuan You**, President of Hongbo Clean Energy.

"This is the first greenfield Chinese investment in Poland. It is also an extremely important element in the development of the entire region

managed by the zone. I believe that Hongbo will become Poland's ambassador in China, which will translate into further investment," said **Krzysztof Drynda**, Deputy President of the WSEZ.

In December last year, representatives of the WSEZ participated in an economic mission to China, which was intended to establish trade and economic cooperation between the two countries. Members of the zone's board took part in the Automechanika Shanghai trade fair, the world's second largest presentation of the automotive industry, and the Chengdu Food & Drinks Fair.

"I hope that Chinese investments will be followed by high technology transfer. Our potential in the form of talented students and highly skilled engineers can prompt Asian investors to locate research and development centers in Poland," explained **Maciej Badora**, President of the Wałbrzych zone. ■



Patriotism

as I see it

Almost 500 students took part in the competition "INVEST-PARK for Patriotism", which was organized by the Wałbrzych zone. Every participant received a prize or a gift. The art competition was held under the motto "Patriotism as I see it." Young patriots from 15 schools sent in almost 500 works. The paintings referred to Poland's history, famous Poles, national symbols and patriotic behavior.

"I find it immensely inspirational that the competition turned out to be so popular. The students clearly put their hearts into the works and showed huge creativity. As a result it was very difficult to award prizes because each painting was worthy of appreciation," Maciej Badora, President of the Wałbrzych zone, said during the award ceremony.

The judges decided to award 100 distinctions, including three main prizes for students of Wałbrzych schools. They went to Alicja Rybińska of Public Primary School no. 28, Sebastian Filipiak of Public Primary School no. 10, and Julia Cismasz of Middle School no. 4. The winners received multimedia tablets, patriotic scarves of the Wałbrzych zone, and gadgets connected with ecology and safety.

The event was accompanied by a competition for the most beautiful eagle – Poland's emblem. Nine drawings were made with chalk in the car park in front of the seat of the Wałbrzych zone. Social media users voted for the best work. The award went to students of Primary School no. 2. ■





OLEŚNICA

Tradition and modernity



MICHAŁ KOŁACIŃSKI

Mayor of Oleśnica

The atmosphere here is unique! Cycling routes and swimming pools are everywhere, and they are very popular here. It is simply impossible to be bored in Oleśnica! Visitors and performers from all over the world come to take part in the Oleśnica Festival of Circus and Art (OFCA). Representatives of different countries come to the annual Europe Days while jazz enthusiasts are well familiar with the Oleśnica Jazz Festival. Those who are keen on heavier tunes visit our town during the Oleśnica Rock Festival, which is gaining greater recognition each year. Fans of hip hop music wait impatiently for the AGRAFKA. Oleśnica also organizes a festival of classical music. Let me put it this way: a twenty minute drive from Wrocław will take you to a place which not only boasts a rich cultural and sports offer, but where it is possible to find a moment of respite and make your professional and private plans come true. A high level of education, easy access to kindergartens with some of the highest subsidies for preschool children in Poland, a vast range of allowances and facilities for large families – in Oleśnica, everybody feels at home.



Oleśnica Festival of Circus and Art (OFCA)

For over half a millennium Oleśnica used to be the capital of a duchy, which has become an inherent part of its almost 800-year long history. Today, the aristocratic features of the town are visible not only in its architecture. Oleśnica is still growing and attracting both investors and tourists.

The historical character of Oleśnica is mostly made up of one of the biggest and best preserved castles in Lower Silesia, the Basilica of Saint John the Evangelist, the Market Square and the old town. However, the climate of the town does not come down only to historical monuments – it also includes very well-developed recreational and leisure infrastructure. Numerous parks, kilometers of running and skating routes and ponds offering the possibility of renting boats and kayaks act as a magnet for visitors.

One of Oleśnica's chief assets is its excellent location. Expressway S8 from Wrocław to Warsaw runs through the town, so it takes only 20 minutes to safely reach it from the capital of Lower Silesia, tour the town and use its broad cultural and recreational offer. The attractive location, ease of access and preferential conditions for investors encourage an increasing number of entrepreneurs to situate their business ventures here. GKN Driveline, a provider of drive transmission technologies and components for some of the largest car producers in the world, functions in an area covered by the Wałbrzych Special Economic Zone near Oleśnica. Last year, the company was joined by Alucrom, which specializes in metal processing. There are still almost 45 ha of land available to investors who would like to use the possibility of applying for tax exemptions.



**CHECK THE
AVAILABILITY OF PLOTS
FOR INVESTING NEAR
OLEŚNICA**



THE ANGELUS SILESIVS UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES IN WAŁBRZYCH

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The **FLOWER AND ART** *Festival*

*The annual floral festival attracts over
100,000 visitors, 250 exhibitors and dozens
of accompanying events.*

In May the Książ Castle will become the venue for the Flower and Art Festival for the 29th time. This is one of the biggest and most spectacular events of this kind in Poland. The festival is a celebration of the awakening of life in spring. Its attractions include flowery garlands, breathtaking floral arrangements, artistic performances, shows and animations, court dances and workshops on growing bonsai.

In early May the Książ Castle – the third largest castle in Poland – turns into the beating heart of Lower Silesia. Thousands of tourists and lovers of plants and gardening gather here. The fabulous transformation of the castle accompanied by a unique program of artistic performances situates the Flower and Art Festival among the most interesting events of the month.

“We always try to surprise the visitors with new ideas and arrangements,” says **Grzegorz Grajewski**, President of the Lower Silesia and Lubuskie Branch of the Association of Polish Florists and owner of a florist center. “We invite renowned experts in floristry from Poland and abroad. This year, the Maximilian Hall in the castle will be decorated by a team supervised by



Tomasz Kuczyński, champion of Poland in floristry and winner of the fourth place in the European Florist Championship in Genoa in 2016. The exhibition will be prepared for four days by around 30 masters of the floral art,” he adds.

Thanks to the efforts of the Association of Polish Florists, the **Polish Florist Championship of Lower Silesia and Lubuskie**



Region will be held during the festival. It will be the third edition of the competition. "The contestants will compete in four categories: large arrangements, enclosed compositions, an engagement bouquet, and a surprise category which will be revealed 15 minutes before the competition. Winners of the regional championship will be eligible to participate in the Championship of Poland, which in turn will select Poland's representative for the Championship of Europe. Interestingly, the next edition of Europa Cup will be held in Katowice in 2020," says Mr. Grajewski.

Each year, the Książ Castle attracts hundreds of exhibitors, gardeners, producers of handmade objects, jewelers and restaurant owners. The visitors can see a vast array of plants, flower bulbs, trees, pottery, regional products and artistic decorations such as paintings, jewelry, ornaments and minerals. The event is accompanied by attractions for children, exhibitions, workshops on floristry, shows of floral dresses, film screenings, lectures, performances of court dances and knight fighting, and

presentations of confectionery. **THE NEXT EDITION OF THE FLOWER AND ART FESTIVAL WILL BE HELD AT THE KSIĄŻ CASTLE FROM 29 APRIL TO 3 MAY.**





Czesław Lang, Olympic vice-champion in cycling, two-time medalist of Road World Championship and organizer of Tour de Pologne, on the attractiveness of Polish cycle routes, the benefits of cycling and a healthy lifestyle.

LOWER SILESIA

is worth recommending to everybody

WSSE INFO: In your cycling career you participated in the most prestigious competitions all over the world. From this perspective, how would you describe the attractiveness of Polish cycle routes?

CZESŁAW LANG: It is true, I competed in many places, even as far away as Mexico, but I always felt best in Poland. As a professional cyclist I focused mostly on the race, but it was impossible to ignore the support of the fans. There were thousands of them. Today this number is much higher. The most recent edition of Tour de Pologne was seen by 3.5 million people who came to see the cyclists live. These were people who took a day off, children who came with all their

classmates to see the peloton. It does not surprise me when many cyclists tell me that Tour de Pologne is their favorite race of the season and they look forward to coming back to Poland. The only thing that we lack is high mountains, although there are some legendary spots, such as Ściana Bukowina – the uphill stretch to Gliczarów Górny. Even class cyclists suffer there. You must be in a truly excellent form not to see spots before your eyes when the pace is high. Each year we choose the route in a way that includes fragments for both sprinters and climbers. In this way, the race is both varied and spectacular, which is the essence of road cycling.

What makes southern Poland, and Lower Silesia in particular, special on the map of Polish cycling routes?

As many as seven editions of Tour de Pologne finished on the climb going up to the Orlinek near Karpacz. This is where the results of the race were decided, which serves as the best illustration of the cycling potential of Lower Silesia. I think that those who took part in these races still remember how difficult it was to go up that mountain and beat the rivals. Moreover, the landscape of Lower Silesia is varied. The region is suitable both for professional cyclists, as evidenced by the fact that the last four editions of the Polish Cycling Championship were held in Sobótka and Świdnica, and for amateurs with a passion. The mountains near Karpacz or Jelenia Góra offer exciting routes for cycling enthusiasts. These are also beautiful areas for mountain biking. In a nutshell – Lower Silesia is worth recommending to everybody.

Thanks to you as the organizer of Tour de Pologne, some of the best cyclists in the world regularly visit Poland, which is undoubtedly an excellent way of promoting our country. What do foreign cyclists say about Poland?

Poland's attractiveness is best proven by the fact that the competitors want to return here. When Tour de Pologne was included in the elite group of UCI World Tour races, which is dubbed the Cycling Champions League, the best of the best started coming to us. If a cyclist who has visited almost every country in the world, large cities and tiny villages alike, says that Poland is amazing, we should be really proud. There is another thing that makes me very happy – Tour de Pologne is a race which discovers new stars in the world of cycling. Rafał Majka and Michał Kwiatkowski need no introduction; Christopher Froome went on to win Tour de France three times, Peter Sagan is the current world champion. Although the list goes on, all of them began their great careers during Tour de Pologne. This is another reason why the race is magical – everybody fondly remembers their first triumphs.

You are known not only as the organizer of Tour de Pologne, but also as a promoter of cycling. At the risk of sounding banal, what are the advantages of cycling in comparison with jogging, for example, which has been so popular recently?

All my life has been connected with cycling, so I am an expert in matters connected with it. The most important thing is to keep moving. It makes people healthier, more relaxed and cheerful. I still cycle quite a lot given my age and I must say that it is a joy to see big groups of cyclists on the road from Wilanów to Powsin near Warsaw, for example. I'm sometimes under the impression that the peloton of Tour de Pologne is coming at me from the opposite direction. These

people are developing their passion, invest in equipment, think about taking part in competitions. It is impossible not to be happy when I see how cycling has developed in Poland throughout the last few years. Tour de Pologne for Amateurs, which is held on the last day of the event, shows how many people want to race on the road. There is also Mini Tour de Pologne for kids who would like to taste this sport. This is how Rafał Majka, Michał Kwiatkowski or Katarzyna Niewiadoma started. Mountain biking enthusiasts also have a chance to compete in professional races. The next season of Vienna Life Lang Team Bike Marathons – the most important event of this kind in Poland – begins on 22 April. Last year, over 8,000 people participated in six races. This shows the potential of cycling.

What is the influence of a vegan diet on your health? It is stereotypically thought that a sportsperson should eat a lot of meat to have the power and stamina needed to be successful in this discipline.

People used to think that meat, and especially the proteins in it, is irreplaceable. Incredible as it may sound today, as an amateur cyclist I would eat kielbasa, pork chops or even cabbage and meat stew during competitions. When I turned professional and left for Italy, I discovered new eating habits. In my case, veganism resulted from an illness. I still eat proteins, although from different sources. Many plants, especially leguminous ones, can easily replace meat. Let me put it this way – a few years ago I raced against a Frenchman who was confident that my eating habits would make it impossible for me to win. I hope that he changed his mind about them at the finishing line. ■

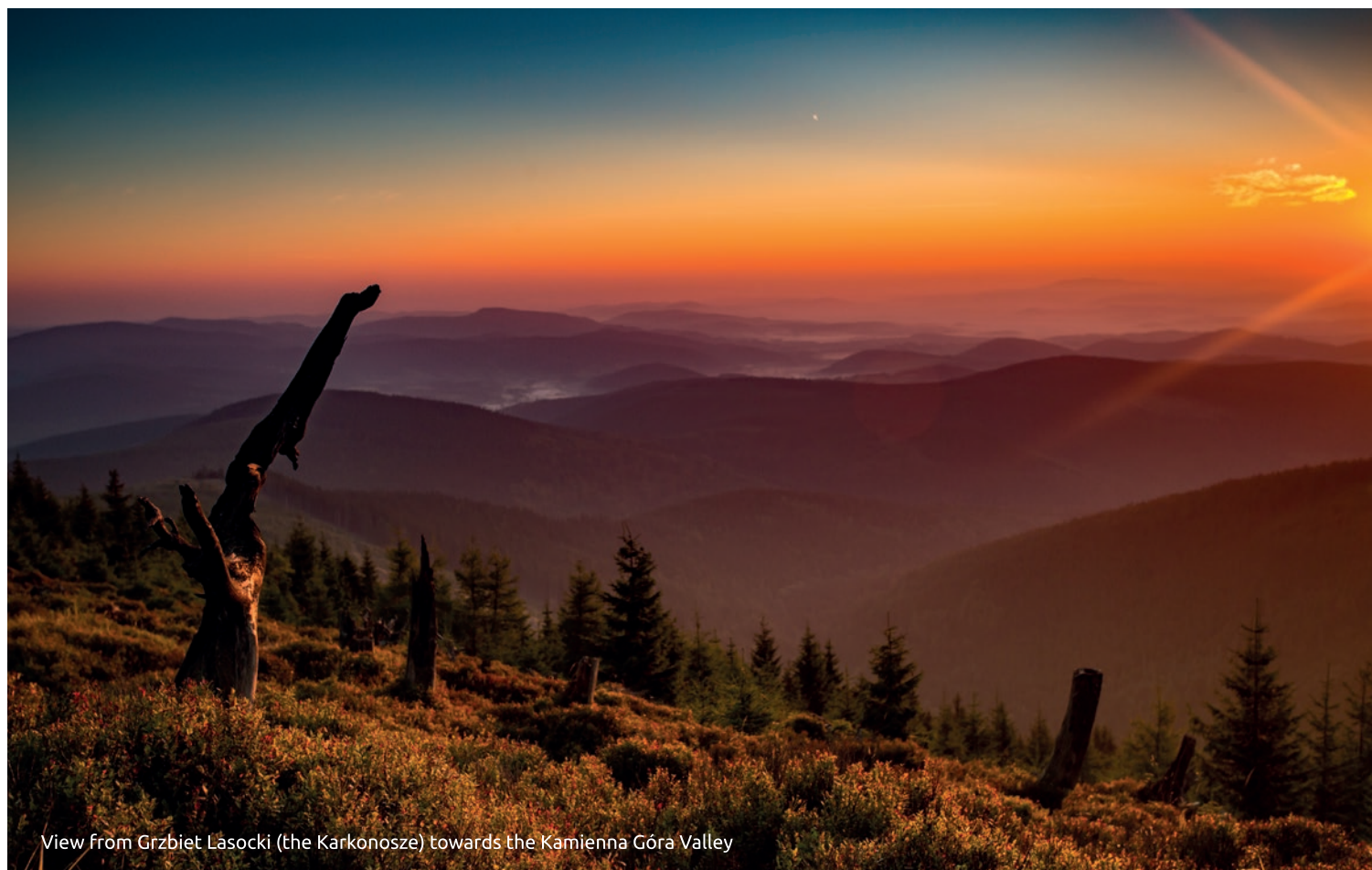




THE KARKONOSZE

Situated in the central part of the West Sudetes, in south-western Poland, the Karkonosze are the biggest and highest mountain range in the entire Sudetes, with their peaks rising over 1,400 meters above sea level. Once known as the Giant Mountains, the Karkonosze stretch over more than 40 km and constitute a natural border between Poland and the Czech Republic. Their highest and most recognizable peak is Śnieżka (1,602 m above sea level), which belongs to the Crown of Polish Mountains.

The Wielki Staw glacial lake and the view of Śnieżka in the morning



View from Grzbiet Łasocki (the Karkonosze) towards the Kamienna Góra Valley

SIZE

FEEL THE SPIRIT OF THE MOUNTAINS

The Karkonosze mountain range is the most frequently visited place in this part of Poland, attracting tourists from both Poland and abroad. Teeming with many specimens of plants and animals, the area has a well-developed tourist infrastructure.

The majestic peaks tempt hikers throughout the year. Śnieżka towers above the surrounding land by over 200 meters, which guarantees unforgettable views in good weather. Since 1880, a meteorological observatory in the characteristic shape of a saucer has been functioning on its top. In its proximity there is an 18th-century Baroque chapel dedicated to St. Laurence. At the foot of the mountain lies Karpacz, the most important resort in the area and an excellent starting point for exploring the region.

The area boasts numerous architectural monuments, including palaces and castles in Chojnik, Wojanów, Łomnica, Staniszków and Mysłakowice. The Karkonosze also offer great conditions for mountain cyclists and hikers as well as enthusiasts of Nordic walking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, downhill skiing and even dog sledding. Around the town of Szklarska Poręba alone there are 19 signed cycling routes between 8 and 50 km long, whose total length exceeds 450 km. The town is also the venue for the Bike Festival, which is the biggest event of this kind in this part of Europe.

Photographs by Marcin Jagiellicz

The peak of snow-covered Śnieżka

Kozie Grzbiety in the summer



View of a reservoir and the town of Sosnówka near Jelenia Góra.
The Karkonosze mountain range and Śnieżka visible in the background.

Photograph by Marcin Jagiellicz

