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Press release

The Polish sector of machine tools and woodworking machines – its potential and development opportunities.

The majority of Polish companies that produce machine tools and woodworking machines are associated in the Association of Manufacturers of Woodworking Machinery, Devices and Tools DROMA in Jarocin.

The members of the Association of Manufacturers of Woodworking Machinery, Devices and Tools DROMA include people related to the sector of machine tools and woodworking machines and the majority of Polish manufacturers of woodworking machinery and tools. The supporting members of DROMA currently include 19 companies and institutions related to the industry of machine tools and woodworking machines.

The main objectives of the DROMA Association are: coordination of cooperation between its members in the design and construction of machines to obtain, process and machine wood, organisation of joint promotional and marketing projects. The Association supports manufacturers of machines, devices and tools in their development and in the manufacturing of products that can compete with foreign ones.

The new challenge for the Polish sector of machine tools and woodworking machines is the effective competition with the leading European companies both on the Polish and European market.

This is why one of the main activities is the support of Polish businesses in the implementation of product innovations, coordination of cooperation between Polish manufacturers in R&D and new investments, as well as assistance in searching for funding sources (such as the EU structural funds). Activities are also planned to consolidate the Polish sector of machine tools and woodworking machines, and to organise joint foreign trade operations, for instance by joint promotion and presentations at international trade shows.

Currently, the Polish sector of machine tools and woodworking machines offers a comprehensive product portfolio for the wood processing sector. The range of machines and devices manufactured by the supporting members of DROMA includes over 200 types of woodworking machines and tools.

These include devices:

- for the sawmill sector,
- for furniture industry,
- for joinery companies,
- for woodworking companies that process timber for general purposes,
- for wood waste management (producers of wood-based boards and wood waste boiler houses).



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Thanks to joint activities of the members, Polish producers associated in DROMA offer design services and supply of fully-equipped woodworking plants. The product offer of Polish companies has helped face intensified competition and maintain a good position on the market. Polish machine tools and devices are technologically advanced.

- Revenues of companies associated in DROMA generated from sales of machine tools and woodworking machines exceeded PLN 170 million in 2006, which was an increase by 10% as compared with 2005.
- At the end of 2006, these companies employed over 1,300 people. The employment in 2006 remained unchanged as compared to 2005.
- The profitability of the most manufacturers of woodworking machines ranged between 5% and 10% in 2006, which was a few percentage points lower than in 2005.

According to DROMA members, the main barriers in the economic activity include:

- high labour costs – 100 % of surveyed companies,
- large tax burdens – 60 % of surveyed companies,
- the tax system – 50 % of surveyed companies,
- interest rates of bank loans – 50 % of surveyed companies,
- unfair competition – 40 % of surveyed companies,
- no qualified workforce – 40 % of surveyed companies.

According to the strategic vision of the development of the Polish forest and timber sector (including the sector of machine tools and woodworking machines), thanks to a large pool of raw materials, the constant increase in the forestation of the country and the development of the woodworking sectors, Poland can soon become one of those countries where the forest and timber sector is one of the crucial industries in the national economy.

Further development of timber processing in Poland should involve implementation of new technologies and cutting-edge devices that use the international achievements in wood processing and refinement. It should also be based on using wood derivatives. The implementation of the leading technological solutions in the domestic industry and the close cooperation between businesses and R&D centres can also have some significance for further development of the forest and timber sector. Moreover, progress is expected in the implementation of advanced information technologies and educational techniques.

All this in turn identifies opportunities for the development of the domestic industry of machine tools and woodworking machines.

As in the case of the whole Polish economy, the competitiveness of the Polish industry of machine tools and woodworking machines in the coming years will depend on the ability of fast implementation of modern technological, technical and organisational solutions. Thus, activities undertaken in the sector aim at creating conditions favourable to increased innovativeness.

In order to increase the sales of machine tools and woodworking machines on the Polish market and on foreign markets, all our manufacturers have to not only attain top quality, but also implement cutting-edge construction and technological solutions in line with the developments in the forest and timber sector.

On 10 January 2005, DROMA signed an agreement in Warsaw to join the Polish Technology Platform for Forest and Wood Industry. The agreement was signed by 32 leading associations, research and development institutes, companies related to the forest and wood sector, the National Forests General Directorate and Bank Ochrony Środowiska (BOŚ). The Platform is aimed at supporting activities of the industry and research units undertaken to develop the sector, for instance by developing modern

technologies, promoting innovations and scientific and technical development in the forest and wood sector. The Platform will become the main mechanism for financing the development of the sector as part of the National Development Plan for 2007-2013.

The priority research topics included in the research programme include the following:

- New applications of solid wood, advanced technologies and devices for processing solid wood, with special consideration of hardwood
- Wood-based products incorporating (timber, agricultural and other) waste
- Modern devices and tools in wood processing technologies
- Technologically advanced wood protection products and systems
- Advanced wood drying and thermal processing technologies
- Technologies and devices for improved wood processing

This selection of priority research areas stems from fast development of the international furniture and woodworking sectors, the existing research and technological potential in the country, sufficient industrial facilities in Poland and developed exports. It is also important that the identified topics pertain to problems of the forest and wood sector, which is one of the largest and fastest developing industries in the European Union.

Advanced materials, technologies and devices determine the development of many Polish companies, including SMEs that can offer competitive products on the national and foreign markets.

DROMA's companies commence more and more investments aimed at improving technological processes thanks to the EU assistance funds. Last year, Gorzowska Fabryka Maszyn GOMA moved to its new premises. Droma members completed targeted projects that implemented innovative construction and technological solutions financed thanks to funds that support research and development in SMEs.

Other targeted projects are now being prepared. They will focus on expanding the product portfolio, implementing new construction solutions, technologies and devices to use timber most effectively.

The challenge for our manufacturers is to enter market segments dominated by world leaders, especially the market of large furniture producers, by applying CNC units and machine tools in production.

Other projects to be soon implemented will focus on the following topics:

- new types of veneering machines for furniture production,
- methods and devices to optimise and remove material flaws thanks to optical flaw detection,
- visualisation of wood waste burning processes,
- a line for joining wood, including a line for production of furniture boards,
- mechanisation and optimisation of sawn timber processing line including multiple-blade saws.

A long-term tradition in the construction of woodworking machines, production capacities and the implementation of innovative solutions should be conducive to the application of the above solutions in the near future. As a result, the Polish industry of machine tools and woodworking machines will be more competitive.

For more information visit: www.droma.com.pl