



WYDAWNICTWO  
INWESTOR



PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS



Poznań, 8 February 2007

*Press release*

## **1st Economic Forum of the Polish Wood and Furniture Industry POLWOOD 2007**

**The 1st Economic Forum of the Polish Wood and Furniture Industry will be held on 24 April, the first day of DREMA and FURNICA 2007. Its participants will include both Polish and foreign scientists, experts and practitioners.**

The event is organised by Inwestor Publishing House and the Poznań International Fair since this important economic forum for the woodworking and furniture sectors will be held at the PIF grounds. The partners include PricewaterhouseCoopers, the Polish Economic Chamber of Wood Industry (PIGPD) and the Faculty of Wood Technology of the Agricultural University in Poznań.

The aim of the forum is to present the main problems experienced by woodworking and furniture companies in Poland and projections for their occurrence in the future. The forum will also feature a debate with invited experts who will identify development directions and medium-term opportunities for the woodworking and furniture industry in Poland.

The panellists invited to the 1st Economic Forum of the Polish Wood and Furniture Industry include: Robert Barnden, global leader of PricewaterhouseCoopers forest, paper and packaging practice; Prof. Witold Orłowski, former head of the economic aides' team of the President of the Republic of Poland, currently Chief Economic Advisor at PwC; Adam Żołnowski, Vice-Director at PwC; Bogdan Czemko, office director of the Polish Economic Chamber of Wood Industry (PIGPD) and others. The participants will also include Polish and foreign entrepreneurs – manufacturers of sawn timber, furniture and other wood products. They will show how they cope with problems related to the shortage of raw materials, capital and qualified workforce. Such large international players as Pfeleiderer and small family companies will be among them. What are the prospects for the Polish timber sector in the coming years? The answer to this question requires deep analyses conducted by scientists and top quality experts.

24 April 2007 will be a day of exchange of know-how of these scientists and experts and of experiences gained by practitioners. They will help identify directions of activities and inspire Polish entrepreneurs. They will encourage politicians and decision makers to support the Polish wood and furniture industries.

**Media partners:** Gazeta Przemysłu Drzewnego, Meblarstwo, drewno.net

### Organisers:

- **Inwestor Publishing House** - publisher of "Gazeta Przemysłu Drzewnego" (the largest and the most popular monthly for the wood processing sector, published for 10 years), "Meblarstwo" (a monthly for furniture producers), "Market in Poland. Forestry&Wood&Furniture" (an English language magazine about the Polish wood and furniture markets addressed to foreign readers), drewno.net – a specialist web service. The company also organises business meetings, competitions for pupils from schools with wood processing specialisations, exhibitions of old machinery and tools for the wood processing and furniture industries.

**Contact:** Małgorzata Wnorowska, Editor-in-Chief of Gazeta Przemysłu Drzewnego  
[goscia@drewno.net](mailto:goscia@drewno.net), +48 058 531 27 53

- **Poznań International Fair** – the organiser of trade show on its proprietary exhibition grounds in Poznań and in other cities in Poland. The events include the International Trade Fair of Machines and Tools for the Wood and Furniture Industries DREMA, the Trade Fair of Components for Furniture Production FURNICA and the Fair of Furniture, Accessories and Furnishing MEBLE.

**Contact:** Jacek Obarski, Promotion Expert for DREMA, FURNICA, BUDMA  
[jacek.obarski@mtp.pl](mailto:jacek.obarski@mtp.pl), phone: +48 061 869 21 69

### Partners:

- **PricewaterhouseCoopers** – cooperates with wood, paper and furniture companies all over the world, offering audit services and strategic, financial, logistic, commercial, economic and tax consulting. PwC's clients include both global and local companies. PwC has a forest, paper, furniture and packaging practice. Team members include auditors and experts with know-how and experience in cooperation with companies that process and sell timber and wood derivatives.

**Contact:** Wojciech Ławniczak, Marketing Communications Manager,  
[wojciech.lawniczak@pl.pwc.com](mailto:wojciech.lawniczak@pl.pwc.com), +48 061 850 51 25

- **The Polish Economic Chamber of Wood Industry (PIGPD)** – established in 1994 by a group of sawmill industry companies. It now associates over 100 members, including mainly sawn timber production and processing plants and companies. It also associates other entities – scientific institutions, manufacturers of wood processing machines and tools, design studios. The potential of the companies associated in the Chamber reflects approx. 50 percent of sawn timber produced in Poland. Most of this sawn timber is further processed. The Chamber publishes "Rynek Drzewny", a specialist magazine, organises study visits, conferences, training courses for managers and employees of industrial plants.

**Contact:** Bogdan Czemko, PIGPD office director,  
[pigpd@drewno.pl](mailto:pigpd@drewno.pl), +48 061 822 47 52

### The industry needs a debate

The wood and furniture industries have always been important for the Polish economy. Since the political breakthrough in the early 90s, the sector has experienced crucial changes following the introduction of the free market economy, i.e. privatisation, bankruptcy of state-owned enterprises, increasing fragmentation,

unequal competition between obsolete Polish technologies and cutting-edge know-how of foreign companies. Additionally, the purchase of timber from the National Forests was very problematic, which led to the bankruptcy of many companies in 2001.

Poland's accession to the European Union was yet another breakthrough. The Polish wood industry caught up with the European leaders in such sectors as furniture, production of wooden pallets or landscaping elements.

The Polish furniture exports brought EUR 4.38 billion in 2005. Poland ranks fourth, following China, Italy and Germany, among the largest international exporters and precedes Canada and the USA.

The opening of European borders brought foreign investors to companies producing wood-based boards and furniture. The latest technologies became available in Poland. Thanks to the EU funds, small and medium-sized companies could position themselves well on the market as important players in the wood and furniture industry.

Exports have been on the rise for the last three years. Thus, companies are developing, but they also face problems. Some of them are specific to the wood and furniture sector, i.e. the shortage of timber, changed purchasing principles, Russian sanctions on Polish wooden products, problems with employing wood processing technology experts. Other equally important problems, such as fluctuations of EUR and USD exchange rates, problems with gaining capital for development or entering new markets, are experienced by other sectors, as well.

Some companies have worked out their own interesting ways of coping with such issues. These should be shown as best practices. For instance, Zenon Matkowski's company imports wood from abroad and shows that imports of timber from remote Siberia can be profitable. Meblomak from Rumia has implemented e-learning, thus training their employees online in wood processing technologies. These are but a few examples that can inspire others to solve their problems in wood and furniture plants.

On the one hand, the timber and furniture industry is taking advantage of the favourable conditions and has become one of the most important sectors of the Polish economy. On the other hand, it could achieve much more were it not for various conflicts, including those with the National Forests. It is worth considering what awaits the industry in a few years' time.