

# IX Polish Outsourcing Forum – Berlin



In the centre of Berlin, on 24 April 2014, the IX Polish Outsourcing Forum was held. This year's edition was organized under the banner of German-Polish ICT Co-operation. The organizers of the Forum were Roadshow Polska and the Pro Progressio Foundation, in cooperation with the National Chamber of Commerce, and the participants included private entrepreneurs and government organizations from Poland and Germany.

The event was covered by the Honorary Patronage of the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Economy Janusz Piechociński and patronage of the Invest in Poland, Polish Chamber of Commerce in Germany, the Association of Polish Cities, Polish-Austrian Economic Co-operation Initiative (PAIWG), Business Club Deutschland Polen, as well Klaster.it and Interizon. A technical partner of the Forum was PwC and German partners of the event were Deutscher Outsourcing Verband (DOV) and the Verband der IT-und Internetwirtschaft in Berlin und Brandenburg (SIBB).

Forum would not have been held without the support of Local Government Partners, including the City of Szczecin, the City of Bydgoszcz, Bydgoszcz Regional Development Agency, the City of Łódź, Łódź Special Economic Zone, and the City of Poznań. The Silver Sponsor of the Forum was Cushman & Wakefield.

Nearly 100 participants of the Forum discussed issues related to cooperation in the German and Polish markets of outsourcing of IT services. The conference was opened by Minister Jacek Robak, Head of the Department of Trade and Investment Promotion at the Polish Embassy in Berlin, speaking about the close cooperation between Poland and Germany, and development of both economies. The second opening speech was the speech of Marek Cieślak, the Vice-President of the City of Łódź, who stressed the long experience of the city in attracting and supporting investments from Germany.

The moderator of the entire Forum was Wiktor Doktor, CEO of Pro Progressio Foundation, who – after the opening speeches – led the rest of the event. The first addressed issue was the subject of the needs of the industry; the major part of the discussion was led by Romek Lubaczewski of PwC. Lubaczewski, together with Andreas Dressler of Terrain and Sascha Kellert, representing SIBB (the largest association of IT companies in the region of Berlin and Brandenburg), discussed the current needs of the German ICT sector and focused on prediction of future developments on the German-speaking markets. On the basis of the speeches of experts it could be concluded that the main challenge of

the German ICT market was the lack of suitably qualified workers in this sector. The panel discussed issues related to Poland and the factors that affect the attractiveness of cooperation with our country. These factors were divided into two groups.

The first included high knowledge and soft skills of Polish personnel, and the knowledge of supporting IT processes. Also labour costs were recognized as an attractive factor, which was highlighted – labour costs in Poland are no longer regarded as low and the labour force is no longer regarded as cheap, however the level of labour costs in relation to performed tasks is at a good level. German speakers also emphasised the fact that the investment climate and tele-information infrastructure in Poland is at a high level, which further facilitates treatment of Poland as a good nearshoring direction. The second group of factors positively influencing the choice of Poland as the direction of outsourcing includes:

- Cultural compatibility.
- Communication and language skills.
- Close geographical distance.

After presentation of the needs of the German ICT sector, there was the time for a strong response from the Polish

side. Rafał Szajewski, representing the Invest in Poland, presented the Polish outsourcing market with a focus on outsourcing and IT processes. Macro- and microeconomic data, historical image of development of the Polish economy and the sector of modern business services and IT services against the background of the Polish economy met with great interest among the participants of the Forum. Continuing the presentation of investment values and competence of human resources, subsequent speakers focused on a more detailed presentation of the offer of Polish cities which were Local Government Partners of the IX Polish Outsourcing Forum. The presentations were given by Marek Kubik (Szczecin), Edyta Wiwatowska (Bydgoszcz) and Marcin Włodarczyk (Łódź). Each city provided essential information required by new investors in the process of choosing a location for their new service centres.

Then, representatives of the Polish public sector took part in a panel discussion and answered questions prepared by Stephan Fricke, the President of the German Association of Outsourcing. The panel gave us the opportunity to listen to the opinions and comments of Aleksandra Suszczewicz of the Łódź Special Economic Zone, Marcin Przyłębski of the Poznań Investor Service Office, and Michał Kornacki of Bydgoszcz Regional Development Agency. The panelists faced questions about the scope of German investments in their cities, their development history and future plans. Most of the questions related to the IT, ITO and ICT sectors, but the answers were supplemented with comments concerning the BPO, SSC, and R&D market. The panelists were also asked questions regarding time needed to acquire new investments and begin activities in their cities. The common conclusion was that upon choosing a location, an organisation can carry out operations within a period of 3 months. Among the participants and listeners at the Forum, there were also representatives of Invest in Pomerania, Wrocław

Agglomeration Development Agency, and Radom and Piła cities, who – together with the cities participating in the panel discussion – established contacts with German companies present at the conference.

Another important element of the Berlin Forum was to discuss issues concerning activities of Polish ICT clusters. This part was started by Professor Piotr Szczepaniak – Vice-chancellor of the Technical University of Łódź and also the Chairman of the ICT Polska Centralna Klaster [Central Poland ICT Cluster]. Presentation by the Professor showed the size of the Cluster, its relationship with the Technical University of Łódź and member firms, indicating the impact of the cluster on the close relations between the world of science tele-information business. The subject clusters and Science – Business relations was further discussed in the panel by representatives of Klaster.IT from the Zachodniopomorskie province. Knowledge of experts representing service providers (Consileon, Unizeto), law firms (Rafał Malujda Attorney Office) and Szczecin Science and Technology Park introduced the forum participants to principles of operation of the ICT Clusters, their place in relation to the IT industry and help with development of the the ICT sector in Poland.

The final two presentations were led by Wiktor Doktor, CEO of Pro Progressio Foundation, and Krystian Bestry, the President of Infosys BPO together with Krzysztof Misiak, Partner at Cushman & Wakefield. The Pro Progressio CEO, in his 30-minute speech, clearly presented the possibilities of cooperation between Polish and German ICT market, dividing them into three main areas. The first area was the use of the Polish IT staff, whether in the form of permanent recruitment or IT Contracting. The second and, as emphasised, a more important area was the use of services provided by outsourcing companies which do already operate on Polish territory; the third area was

the choice and construction of a near-shoring operating centre in one of Polish cities. Wiktor Doktor presented also steps to be taken into account while selecting business partners, so that an outsourcing project could run smoothly and all tasks were performed successfully.

Krystian Bestry, together with Krzysztof Misiak, presented a case study of development of Infosys BPO company in Łódź, showing the close relationship between an outsourcing company (Infosys BPO), a consulting firm (Cushman & Wakefield) and a developer (Skanska Property Poland) in the process of selecting a new location for the operating centre and in the process of further development of an outsourcing services provider in the selected location.

IX Polish Outsourcing Forum is already a thing of the past; the topic which was most frequently discussed during lectures, panel discussions and many backstage conversations was German-Polish business relations. Established contacts will probably constitute a basis for future business relationships, both at the Polish and German side.

Words of appreciation are due to Eva Aboo, the President of Roadshow Poland, thanks to whom the Forum has been continuously organised for nine years. Polish Outsourcing Forum is a series of events promoting Poland as the best outsourcing location in the world. Every year, speakers and industry experts discuss current outsourcing sector issues; for two years, the forum has been organised outside Polish borders. The next edition will be held next year; the only question is where it should take place as this year's conference included representatives of Spain, Ireland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Romania, who expressed their interest in organizing the Forum in their respective countries. ■