

Press release, Warsaw, January 2020

Polish furniture companies in the United States – launching a new tool of promotion

Polish Chamber of Commerce of Furniture Manufacturers brings together Polish companies from the furniture industry. The mission of the Chamber is to integrate the furniture industry, participate in shaping its development and promote Polish furniture in the country and in the world. This is what the new project of the Chamber is aiming at - the joint participation of Polish furniture manufacturers in one of the world's largest furniture fairs at High Point Market in North Carolina.

The project focuses on achievements and the success of Polish entrepreneurs, craftsmen and designers who together achieved 6th place in the world in terms of the value of furniture production and, as forecasts for 2019, strong 2nd place in export value. Despite this undoubted success, the image of Polish furniture production in the world is focused on low price and high quality. Foreign recipients do not recognize the pedigree or history of the furniture industry in Poland. Furthermore, Polish entrepreneurs, focused on maintaining international competitiveness, are not able to increase their effort to build a strong Polish brand.

Standing strong together

Dialogue with the industry revealed that the best way to build strong brand image is to organize national stands at the most important furniture fairs. However, current programs do not provide such an opportunity. Due to the fragmentation, companies do not have enough strength to fight for their brand. Those are the reasons behind the idea for a joint stand and presentation of Polish products during the three editions of High Point in North Carolina in the United States (April and October 2020, April 2021), which will allow to methodically build relationships with business partners and create a positive image of the Polish furniture industry. “We chose the United States, because in this market we need to present Polish companies as a strong group,” says Jan Szynaka, president of the Polish Chamber of Commerce for Furniture Manufacturers, “It is also a new promotion model that allows combining the potential of companies with building the image of Poland as a country offering branded products.”

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The project is co-financed by the Polish National Foundation. “We have a chance to use current potential to support the creation of a strong and recognizable brand of Polish furniture. Creating a consistent image of Poland and the most export-oriented sector of the Polish economy at international level requires strategic actions of the highest quality as well as cooperation of institutions. Polish products are a Polish success that needs to be promoted in the world” - said Marcin Zarzecki, president of the Polish National Foundation. “In our opinion, the implementation of the *Polish Furniture* project provides tools for achieving our goal,” he added. Thanks to the financial support, the organizer is able to book the exhibition space, prepare the stand service and carry out a media campaign along with the preparation of an exhibition promoting Polish design - “From December 2018, the Chamber worked with the Polish National Foundation to develop a strategy that will help support the image of the furniture industry. We managed to find a way to promote Poland and its cultural heritage and economic potential by combining the achievements of Polish designers and furniture manufacturers,” said Tomasz Wiktorski, co-author of the concept of the project – “Launching the project is a great success of the furniture industry and an opportunity to show that we can successfully enter new markets by joining forces and presenting a comprehensive offer of Polish furniture.”

Polish furniture industry in figures

In 2019, Polish furniture will generate a value of sold production exceeding PLN 51 billion, which will give Poland the 6th place in the world in the manufacturers' ranking. At the same time, 90% of Polish furniture will be exported, which will ensure Poland's 2nd place in the world (ranking of exporters) - behind China, before Germany and Italy. About 200,000 people currently work in the furniture industry in over 28,000 companies. The success of the furniture industry lies in the diligence, hospitality and solidarity of Poles towards partners from around the world, who have been buying furniture from Poland for over 130 years, have placed the production here and established partnership. Many companies existing today have been operating since the 1880s. Finally, Poland owes its current position in the world to designers and architects awarded in national and international design competitions. Oskar Zieta, Maja Ganszyniec, Tomasz Rygalik, Robert Konieczny, Tomasz Kuchcinski, Tomasz Augustyniak - these are only selected names of internationally recognized Polish designers. Our position is also credited by the pantheon of late designers from the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s - Wanda Telakowska, Boguslaw and Czeslawa Kowalski, Roman Modzelewski (the *Vzór* brand that produces furniture by his design will be responsible for the design of the Polish stand at the High Point Market), and the first half of the 20th century - Stanislaw Wyspianski, Wladyslaw Strzeminski and many others. The project focuses on the heritage of Polish material culture, such as furniture products. *Polish products have achieved global success while respecting the natural environment, while drawing the best from the designers' creativity and centuries-old traditions of Polish craftsmanship*, said Michal Góras, member of the board of the Polish National Foundation - *The project supports promoting Poland on the economic, historical,*

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cultural and environmental level, which not only is in line with the foundational statement, but also constitutes harmonic integration of several areas of PNF's activities - he emphasized.

Why High Point?

High Point Market municipal exhibition and fair complex in North Carolina proudly carries over 100 years of furniture trade tradition in the United States. It gathers professionals, designers, interior architects and traders from the east coast of the USA annually. High Point differs from trade fair centers in Europe in the way exhibitions are located in almost 160 facilities throughout the city (the total exhibition area is over 1.1 million square meters), and the city lives only for exhibitions dedicated to furniture industry that are organized twice a year. Participation in these fairs is a great business opportunity as the event is a must on the schedule for people wanting to introduce furniture for sale in American retail chains. The United States is the world leader in furniture imports, reaching a market share of around 30%. Therefore, it is worth using this potential to make Polish furniture appear in the minds of representatives of the American interior design market responsible for the import.

<http://pl.furniture/>

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