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POLAND IN THE SPOTLIGHT AT EXPO 2020 DUBAI: THE POLISH–ARAB ECONOMIC FORUM AND NATIONAL DAY OF POLAND WERE HELD DURING EXPO 2020 DUBAI

The Polish–Arab Economic Forum (6.12.2021) and National Day of Poland (7.12.2021) were visited by senior state officials and representatives of institutions, by entrepreneurs, and experts. Poland signed bilateral agreements with partners from the United Arab Emirates, and strengthened its export and investment potential in the Middle East. The Polish Investment and Trade Agency (PAIH) was responsible for the organisation of the events and Poland's participation in Expo 2020 Dubai.

- The Polish–Arab Economic Forum attracted around 650 participants (plus 150 online guests) who attended a number of business meetings as well as export and investment panels.
- Three memorandums were concluded at a plenary session, which will activate bilateral contacts and business relations between Poland and the United Arab Emirates.
- PAIH signed a contract with DMCC – a free trade zone in Dubai. This will help Polish companies to establish commercial relations with key global markets. KUKE and ECI executed a memorandum to grant credit support to domestic exporters. The third agreement was concluded between the Polish Chamber of Commerce and the UAE Federation of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry, which will result in the launch of the Emirate–Polish Business Council.
- Participants of the Polish–Arab Economic Forum joined a number of discussion panels on exports in the context of green energy, the digital economy, applied arts, and food safety. At the same time, various presentations were held to showcase investment offers regarding the infrastructure of the future, as well as possibilities and forms of investing in Poland.
- Partners of the Forum were Polish Development Bank (BGK) and PKN Orlen.
- Polish Day on 7 December 2021 offered a great chance to exhibit the scientific, cultural and economic potential of the country. The official part of the event included a ceremonial performance of the Polish national anthem and the raising of the Polish flag. The eventful day culminated in a popular Polish music concert.

The Polish–Arab Economic Forum begun with speeches delivered by officials from both countries. Grzegorz Słomkowski, vice president of the Polish Investment and Trade Agency, opened the event: *‘I am very happy to be here today with you to represent the Polish Investment and Trade Agency, as well as to present to you our experts, panellists, and guests from all over the world. The Polish–Arab Economic Forum is the major business event held as part of Poland’s participation in Expo 2020 Dubai.’*

Grzegorz Piechowiak, Secretary of State in the Ministry of Development and Technology, made a reference to the topic of the Polish–Arab Economic Forum in general: *‘I am more than pleased to be a part of this extraordinary event which is one of the highlights of the economic programme to promote Poland during Expo 2020 Dubai. I am very glad that we have managed to meet despite the pandemic-related difficulties that we are all facing. The history of Polish–Arab relations goes back to medieval times when Arab science and culture were blooming. Our relations have always been very good and we wish to develop them further. We see the Arab counties as an attractive, promising market with over 400 million*

people.’ In his speech, Grzegorz Piechowiak pointed to the fact that the Arab states are transformation oriented. That, in turn, translates into opportunities for Polish businesses who offer a wide range of possibilities to foreign partners.

Modern technologies, such as green energy, the digital economy, and food safety, play an important role when collaborating. *‘I would like to assure you that it is one of our main objectives at the Ministry of Development and Technology to internationalise the Polish economy, as far as exports and investments are concerned. I am confident that today’s meeting will help strengthen Polish–Arab economic ties and together we will build plenty of business projects’*, Grzegorz Piechowiak added.

Another speaker at the inauguration of the Polish–Arab Economic Forum was Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, Minister of State for Foreign Trade of the United Arab Emirates. In his speech, he pointed out that the 50th anniversary of the UAE’s unification coincided with the culminating events of Poland’s presence at Expo 2020 Dubai. He stressed that Poland was a trusted partner and he saw huge potential for collaboration between the two countries in e-commerce, fintech, food safety, transportation, and a number of other sectors. The fact that the country is undergoing a transformation to a circular economy would make the collaboration even easier. The Minister of State for Foreign Trade declared that the United Arab Emirates was open to investments, offered favourable conditions for start-ups, and one of the most innovative solutions for businesses, namely a dedicated digital platform that allows businesses to be started online in just a couple of days.

Jakub Sławek, chargé d’affaires in the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in the UAE, also shared his thoughts on Polish–Arab cooperation with the Forum participants. He highlighted the fact that Expo and the economic forum helped strengthen local relations in the United Arab Emirates, which is evidenced by the recent establishment of the Emirate–Polish Business Council.

Before the discussion panels began, Waldemar Buda, Secretary of State in the Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy also delivered a speech. He stressed that participation of senior officials from three ministries – Ministry of Development and Commerce, Ministry of International Cooperation, and Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy – was an indication of the event’s significance.

Economic Forum thematic panels

Green energy for the future

After the opening speeches, two types of discussion panels were held that presented export and investment opportunities. The first discussion in the main hall was entitled ‘Green energy for the future’. Maciej Mazur, president of the Polish Alternative Fuels Association, moderated the panel. In his introduction to the discussion, he stressed that the world needed to rely to a much greater extent on renewable energy sources. These objectives and expectations have been perfectly adopted by the city of Dubai, as well as Expo 2020 Dubai with its motto ‘Connecting Minds, Creating the Future’ and the subthemes ‘Opportunity, Mobility, and Sustainability’. The panel’s goal was to find answers to vital questions, and come up with ideas on how to turn green transformation ambitions into reality.

The panellists discussed the role that Dubai and the World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies (WAIPA) had played thus far in the development of green investment. It was stressed that a clean

technology project had already started in 2010, engaging parties from both the private and public sectors. A significant part of the discussion was devoted to hydrogen and its role in green transformation. Grzegorz Józwiak, Director of the Alternative Fuels Implementation Office at PKN Orlen, talked about the Polish strategy in that area. He reminded the attendees that PKN Orlen had announced its ambition to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 and was planning to launch 'Hydrogen Eagle', an infrastructure project related to the hydrogen economy in Poland, and beyond in Central Europe. PKN Orlen strives to recycle urban waste and turn it into hydrogen to power transportation. The plan is to build 120 hydrogen refuelling stations. The project's objective is to reduce CO₂ emission levels and their carbon footprint by a million tons annually.

The panellists also discussed possible cooperation between the two states in the field of green energy. Moreover, they stressed the need to create a market for hydrogen and launch cooperation that includes investments in technologies and transportation, as well as to make a decision on the type of hydrogen that would best serve the purpose.

The digital economy – new opportunities for modern societies

Participants shared their experiences and forecasts regarding upcoming social and economic changes. The main topic of discussion was the role of women in modern society as leaders in fintech, e-commerce and cybersecurity. The talks also covered e-commerce as a driver for international trade modernisation. The panellists also discussed other vital aspects of investment projects in the digital economy.

Tradition and modern style – Polish design

One of the topics discussed during the panel was tradition, heritage and their impact on design. The participants also talked about how the intertwining of cultures affects art. They discussed the changing approach to designing and presenting prototypes. A significant part of the discussion was devoted to the Polish Table installation, located in the Polish Pavilion, which is an example of modern design and timeless messages rooted in tradition. The panellists wondered what the long-term impact of artificial intelligence and state-of-the-art technologies would have on applied art. They pointed out that modern technologies also offered wider opportunities to artists, craftspeople, and designers.

Food safety – a challenge or an opportunity?

The next panel was devoted to food safety. Accessibility of water and agricultural technologies were also discussed, as well as their impact on sustainable economic growth. The issue of food safety was also presented from a historical perspective. It was highlighted that current food safety levels were historically high, and food quantity and quality is now much better than ever before. The problem of the chemical contamination of food products was also mentioned, which is one of the largest global challenges. The discussion turned to water quality analysis. There are no real-time data, as samples are collected and then tested in laboratories. That problem could be solved by online testing, using bio-factors that indicate if the water is toxic. Some cities and countries implement safety procedures to measure water quality. Moreover, the issue of wastewater management in the food industry was discussed by Wojciech Poćwiardowski, PhD, from As Produkt Research and Development Centre. Futuristic drones were mentioned – these could take pictures and create terrain maps, which, by making comparisons, may help to identify an appropriate strategy to develop food crops.

Expo Horticultural 2029 Łódź

The Polish–Arab Economic Forum also offered the opportunity to promote Expo Horticultural 2029 Łódź. Hanna Zdanowska, Mayor of Łódź, delivered a presentation on the event. She stressed that for over 200 years Łódź has been dynamically expanding. It is also one of the major academic centres. The city invests in state-of-the-art services and innovative technologies, and its central location in Poland and Europe facilitates its growth. Hanna Zdanowska pointed to the fact that Łódź has become an important business hub for IT, pharmacy, and biotechnology.

Expo Horticultural 2029 Łódź is also known as the Green Expo. The event is being organised by the International Association of Horticultural Producers (AIPH). Generally speaking, the event will be devoted to ecology, green solutions in cities, agriculture, and horticulture.

Presentation of the Digital Poland 2021 report

The Digital Poland 2021 report was presented to Forum participants by Monika Zielak from the Polish Investment and Trade Agency. The publication offers a thorough insight into innovative sectors and digital technologies in Poland. It covers matters related to human resources, legal issues, and science. The report is addressed to foreign investors, entrepreneurs, start-up founders, and scientists. The second part of the publication presents several technological sectors – artificial intelligence, drones, e-commerce, edutech, medtech, electro-mobility, and IT. Individual chapters include information on regulations and business and social environments. The publication was a joint effort by over 25 institutions and 60 experts. To download the report, scan the QR code or visit the website: <https://www.digitalpoland.org/publikacje>

Presentation of the SGH (Warsaw School of Economics) report on cooperation between Poland and Arab states

The report prepared by SGH was another publication presented by Arkadiusz Kowalski, head of the department of East Asian Economic Studies at SGH, during the Polish–Arab Economic Forum. The topic of the publication is economic cooperation between Poland and the Arab states, which has been increasing since 2010. Arkadiusz Kowalski stressed that Poland continues to export more than it imports. The value of trade between the two states in 2020 totalled USD 725.9 million, while USD 615.7 million of that amount was the value of Polish exports to the UAE. The majority of the exports go to Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Algeria. The authors of the report interviewed companies operating on local markets, such as Biogen, Comarch and INGLOT, that shared their experiences on business operations in the Middle East. The report concludes that the potential for collaboration is high and modern technologies, creative ideas, and trusted partners in the region are particularly in demand. View the report here: <https://ssl-www.sgh.waw.pl/pl/Strony/news.aspx?NewsID=a2d05283-9f5c-476f-a4eb-3f774ec16135&ListID=e9d24fee-3073-4f61-a014-52ca7e07aff8>

Signing bilateral agreements during a plenary and treaty session

Three agreements were signed during the plenary and treaty session between the institutions from Poland and the United Arab Emirates. The first MOU was concluded between Grzegorz Słomkowski, vice president of the Polish Investment and Trade Agency, and Ahmed Bin Sulay, president of DMCC. DMCC is a dedicated global centre for over 19,000 companies from a number of sectors and industries – from agriculture, energy and financial services, to diamonds, gold and base metals. It is classified as the no. 1 Free Zone in the world. The memorandum will help Polish companies establish trade relations directly with Dubai, the UAE and key global markets more easily.

The second agreement was concluded between export credit insurers from Poland and the United Arab Emirates. The documents were signed by Janusz Władyczak, president of Export Credit Insurance Corporation (KUKE) and Massimo Falcioni, president of Etihad Credit Insurance. Collaboration between KUKE and ECI will provide support to companies looking for export opportunities to the partner markets.

At the session, a memorandum of understanding was also concluded between the Polish Chamber of Commerce (KIG) and the UAE Federation of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry. This renews and provides additional details in relation to the earlier agreement of 2009. The parties also signed an annex to the agreement that established the Emirate–Polish Business Council, which marked the beginning of the official formation of the council's structure and the appointing of members by Poland and the UAE. Both the Federation and KIG see the council as an important tool to activate bilateral contacts and business relations between Poland and the United Arab Emirates.

National Day of Poland at Expo 2020 Dubai

National Day of Poland at Expo 2020 Dubai was held on 7 December 2021. On that day, the eyes of the Expo 2020 Dubai visitors turned to the Poland Pavilion, which hosted a number of artistic events, such as a Chopin concert, a fashion show and dance performances. The audience also took part in a quiz on the subject of Poland. Then, the white and red parade of state officials, Pavilion staff, and guests marched under the Al Wasl dome. The official part of the event, held in the presence of top state officials from Poland and the United Arab Emirates, included a ceremonial performance of the Polish national anthem and the raising of the Polish flag. That special day culminated in a popular Polish music concert. In the evening, the Al Wasl dome was illuminated with white and red lights. National Day of Poland took place during the week the United Arab Emirates celebrated its Golden Jubilee, namely the 50th anniversary of the founding of the state.

The Polish-Arab Economic Forum and Poland National Day were also a good occasion to Polish brands and companies to come to Dubai and establish new business contacts with regional entrepreneurs. Many Partners of the Poland Pavilion attended both events, to mention a few: LA TEZZA – an original brand that creates contemporary handbags and accessories made of leather and recovered materials; LUG LIGHT FACTORY – a leading European manufacturer of professional lighting solutions; KORBO – a brand of construction blocks based on gear wheels.

Poland.
**Creativity inspired
by nature**



Ministerstwo
Rozwoju i Technologii



Polska Agencja
Inwestycji i Handlu
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More information on the website devoted to Poland's participation in World Exhibitions: www.expo.gov.pl and on social media channels of Poland at Expo: [LinkedIn](#), [YouTube](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#).



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