*Poznań, 10.03.2020*

**Furniture buyers from 69 countries at the Meble Polska 2020 Furniture Trade Fair**

**Changing the date of the MEBLE POLSKA Furniture Trade Fair from March to February proved to be the right move. The largest international furniture buying plattform in Central and Eastern Europe took place in Poznań between 25 – 28 February 2020 and attracted thousands of furniture buyers from 69 countries! This is an absolute record from all previous editions.**

**New date - new opportunities**

In recent years, the Meble Polska Furniture Trade Fair took place in March, when there is a real market marathon willingly visited by furniture buyers from Asia. Due to the growing importance of the Poznań event on the international stage and the numerous voices of exhibitors, the MTP Group - the organizer of the MEBLE POLSKA fair - decided to allow traders who planned to participate in Asian events, to take part in the furniture contracting event in Poznan. - The main strength of the Meble Polska Furniture Trade Fair is the visitors who come to Poznań every year from almost all over the world. That is why it is so important that the date of the fair is the most convenient for them - explains the director of MEBLE POLSKA Furniture Trade Fair, Józef Szyszka.

 The change of date had indeed contributed to a further increase in interest in participating in the fair among foreign visitors. A week before the start of the event, everything indicated that it would be a record edition in terms of the number of furniture buyers who would take part in it. The data from the visitor registration system showed that almost 20% more traders were going to come to Poznań than during previous editions; so successful in this respect. “During the first two days of the fair we recorded a significant increase in the number of visitors, which was also noted by exhibitors at the display stands, with whom we had the opportunity to talk. However, disturbing information about the approaching coronavirus in Poland, resulted in the second half of the fair, and especially the last day, being marked by a slightly lower attendance” - explains Józef Szyszka. Ultimately, **the total number of participants amounted to 21,949 people** and was almost 2 percent higher than the previous year.

**Visitors from 69 countries**

The fair was preceded by a broad, international promotional campaign, covering both advertising and content marketing activities on the most important markets, as well as direct marketing aimed at the representatives of retail chains. As a result, this year representatives of the largest purchasing groups and furniture store chains from Europe and many wholesale furniture distributors from other continents visited Poznań. Traditionally among foreign visitors, the most buyers come from Germany (12.5 percent). Numerous groups of traders also come from Ukraine, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Great Britain, Romania, Russia, France and Belarus. Representatives of some companies even amounted to several dozen people. For example, a furniture trade giant in Europe, the XXXLutz group, visited the fair in Poznań. The data shows that the **share of foreign visitors** this year was even higher than before and amounts to **38 percent**. - According to conversations with exhibitors despite earlier declarations of individual retail chains cancelling their involvement at the last minute, most furniture manufacturers participating in the fair were satisfied with the number and quality of visitors. This is confirmed by the fact that we have already accepted a large number of inquiries and reservations for the next edition - says Józef Szyszka.

**An exhibition worthy of the second biggest furniture exporter in the world**

Meble Polska Furniture Fair is the world's largest representation of the potential of the Polish furniture industry. This years’ edition has proved that there is no other place in the country or abroad, where such a rich and comprehensive offer of Polish furniture manufacturers can be seen. Almost all leading Polish furniture manufacturers interested in export development, exhibited their latest collections in Poznań. There was also quite a large number of debutants at the fair. Traditionally, a large part of the exhibition consists of furniture made from furniture boards, but quite a few exhibitors offering products produced of solid wood and other furniture from the high-end segment, were also displayed. Pavilions with upholstered furniture looked great. As usual, mattress manufacturers also prepared a rich and varied exhibition. The exhibitors comprised of furniture manufacturers from 13 countries: Poland, Belgium, Belarus, Denmark, Estonia, Ireland, Lithuania, Germany, Russia, Slovakia, Sweden, Turkey and Ukraine. Many visitors’ attention was drawn to the interesting arrangement of the trade fair stands, emphasizing that they were in no way inferior to the best world standards. The fair was supplemented with the HOME DECOR business interior exhibition and the ARENA DESIGN event, which was held under the slogan of ‘Slowness’.

During the fair, as part of the Arena Design exhibition, you could see two new exhibitions presenting Polish designs: **FORMS OF THE FUTURE - AREA OF POLISH DESIGNERS** and the **POLISH DESIGN VISIONERS** zone. The first showcased the designs of Polish designers, the second was devoted to the presentation of Polish brands focusing on visionary, bold and innovative designs. In total around 500 companies and brands were represented in the 11 pavilions at the fair.

**Debates about the state and future of furniture making**

This year's novelty, a series of panel discussions on the Brand Stage, was dedicated to the challenges currently facing the Polish furniture industry. During the debates, there were talks about creating a Polish furniture brand abroad, including design, business, international cooperation, innovation and technology. Over 60 guests were invited to the debates - government representatives, furniture experts, manufacturers, designers and scientists, as well as journalists from Poland and abroad, representatives of the Horeca sector and institutions related to education, design and industry. Participants in the discussions included: **Jan Szynaka** - president of the Szynaka Furniture Group and the Polish Chamber of Commerce for Furniture Manufacturers, **Mauro Mamoli** - president of the Italian association Federmobili, **Jan Kurth** **PhD** from the Association of the German Furniture Industry (VDM), **Piotr Wójcik** - president of the board of Wójcik Meble, **Prof.** **Imke Lohmann,**  a professor of Chengdu University, **Prof. Jerzy Smardzewski** - head of the Furniture Department at the Faculty of Wood Technology of the Poznań University of Life Sciences, **Prof. Katarzyna Laskowska** - head of the Studio of Educational-Design Programs and Industry Cooperation at the University of Arts in Poznań and **Sascha Peters** **PhD** from Haute Innovation - a specialist in the field of materials and technology, as well as many other experts.

**Minister of Development Jadwiga Emilewicz** took part in the discussion dedicated to the role of start-ups in the furniture industry. Representatives of start-ups operating in the field of new technologies and optimization of production and logistics processes have presented different perspectives. Included was the consideration about cooperation at the interface of small, rapidly growing innovative companies with representatives of large entities from the furniture sector. Minister Jadwiga Emilewicz identified 4 areas where entrepreneurs, start-ups and investors should unite their forces in search of an innovative model for the economy in the coming years. The first of these areas is the optimization of the production process from design through to production and distribution. The customer will be able to design and see a piece of furniture that will be produced and delivered to the end user, with minimum input of human labor, utilizing modern tools called "augmented reality". Another interesting area is adaptation to changing market expectations, product uniqueness, as well as short series and furniture "customization". Online sales platforms are also an area of ​​significant competitive advantage, and only about 18% of Polish entrepreneurs actively participate in the digitization of their distribution and promotional activities. The fourth factor – ergonomics is about adapting the functionality of manufactured furniture to the requirements of the recipient. An example might be Polish schools that require modernization and changing of equipment, including furniture for children and young people who spend a large part of the day in schools. This will open a huge internal market for domestic furniture manufacturers.

Traditionally, the MEBLE POLSKA fair organizes a series of lectures by the Polish Chamber of Commerce of Furniture Manufacturers. The following were discussed; trends in interior design for 2020, requirements for upholstery, certification of furniture directed to the markets of the Eurasian Economic Union, the latest solutions on the insurance market and calculation of the cost of production, break-even point and unused potential. Seminar participants also learned how to increase sales in furniture showrooms to meet various customer needs, how to succeed in business by improving personal competencies, how to use the occasional visual merchandizing to increase turnover in a furniture showroom, how to acquire young customers and how to maintain profit in times of slowdown.

**Special guests**

As always, impressive guests featured at the Poznań fair - world-renowned designers interacted with the audience on the AD TALKS stage in Hall 3 about the concepts of creative use of the slowness idea, They shared their inspiration, innovative ideas and brought the realities of working with producers and ways to reach the customers, closer. This year the following guests appeared on the stage: **Michael Anastassiades, Torbjørn Anderssen, Carole Baijings, Jan Boelen, Maddalena Casadei (via Skype) and Seetal Solanki.**

**Go global**

The 2020 edition is the next stage of the "Go global" strategy implemented by the MTP Group as part of the MEBLE POLSKA Furniture Fair. - We are constantly developing the geographical coverage of the event. Every year we expand our activities to another important market. This year we focused on North America and as a result, we managed to increase the number of visitors from the United States and Canada by 100 percent. This is just the beginning of our broader international scope. “In future we want to accelerate our promotional expansion because these are the expectations of our exhibitors who are looking for customers on practically all continents” - says Józef Szyszka. One of the elements of the global promotional campaign, was the organization of this year’s annual **General Assembly of the International Furniture Publishing Association** (IAFP - International Alliance of Furnishing Publications) at the Meble Polska Furniture Fair, associating the best magazines and portals of the industry from around the world. Journalists from Singapore, Mexico, India, the United States, Russia, Romania, Turkey, Germany and Bulgaria were hosted in Poznań at the invitation of the MTP Group. Word have started to spread worldwide about the best furniture contracts being in this part of Europe - adds Józef Szyszka.

**MTP Group Gold Medals**

One of the main furniture trends this year is the use of modern technologies in furniture production while referring to the design classics. The second leitmotif is to offer products luxury in perception, and at the same time practical in use. Such conclusions are derived from the analysis of products that won the MTP Group Gold Medals at the Meble Polska 2020 Furniture Fair.

List of products awarded with the Gold Medal of the Meble Polska 2020 Furniture Fair:

* DREAMER LUX - FDM Katarzyna Pańcikiewicz
* Electro - HILDING ANDERS POLSKA Sp. z o.o.
* GRENADA - Fabryka Mebli BENIX Kaczorowscy Sp.j.
* IVREA - FDM Katarzyna Pańcikiewicz
* Kolekcja mebli Pratto - SZYNAKA Meble Sp. z o.o.
* Kolekcja mebli QUANT - DIG-NET LENART Sp. j.
* Kuchnia Ariana - Stolarstwo Usługi Meblowo-Budowlane Adrian Halupczok
* Lagos - Fabryka Mebli TARANKO Aleksander Taranko
* Meble Kuchenne KAMMONO BLACK - Spółka Meblowa KAM Sp.j.
* MIRUM - kolekcja mebli dziecięcych - KONSIMO Sp. z o.o Sp. k.
* Norton - STELLA sp. z o.o.
* OSTIA - BLACK RED WHITE SA
* SAMBA ŁÓŻKO BOXSPRING - WER-SAL Fabryka Mebli Kaczorowscy Sp. j.
* Stół TABB - GRUPA BOZZETTI Sp. z o.o.
* Tactic - STELLA sp. z o.o.

Detailed descriptions of awarded products are available at [www.meblepolska.pl](http://www.meblepolska.pl)

**MEBLE POLSKA 2021**

The next edition of MEBLE POLSKA will be held in Poznań on February 23-26, 2021.