

The Polish side of EURO 2012

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PI 2012 is a company set up by the Polish government to co-ordinate and supervise the Polish side of undertakings ahead of the European Football Championships to be held in Poland and Ukraine in four years' time. POLISH MARKET's Jacek Świdziński discusses PI 2012 activities with the company's President Marcin Herra.

Q: What are the objectives of PI. 2012?

A: PL.2012 is a State Treasury company owned by the Minister of Sports and Tourism. It was set up specifically for the purpose of running, coordinating and supervising all ventures connected with Euro 2012 events in Poland. Its responsibilities in this respect cover a vast range of undertakings including infrastructure (air, rail, road and public transport facilities), construction (building and modernizing sports stadiums in Warsaw, Poznan, Wrocław, Gdańsk, Kraków, and Chorzów), development of residence and training centres, establishing a Euro-related medical care system, teleinformation and IT networks, settlement of the intellectual property issues and the like. In a nutshell: it is not the objective of the company to organise the championships but to ensure that everything that is needed when the European Football Championships are held is in place. To this end we have employed people with vast managerial expertise.

Q: It follows that the company's objectives do not include investing...

A: That's correct. PL. 2012 is not an investor. But it has been given the responsibility to make sure that Polish Euro 2012 organizers take advantage of the best and proven experiences in preparing similar events abroad, that financial means allocated for organizing the championships in Poland are managed well and spent effectively.

Q: The company, I understand, is in close touch with UEFA as well as with the Euro 2012 co-organisers in Ukraine...

A: Establishing contacts was the first thing we did. As regards UEFA, I attended the meeting of its Steering Committee in Switzerland to introduce our company's plans of action. From the outset, we have been collaborating with UEFA on a day-to-day timetable basis on matters concerned with infrastructure and stadiums. At a meeting arranged by our company with UEFA experts on 2 and 3 April, representatives of six Polish cities reported what they had already done in preparation for the Euro championships. UEFA representatives welcomed the positive quality change in project management and reporting. A joint methodology of preparing reports and integrated presentations for UEFA was worked out. Moreover, a master plan – a general timetable covering all sports stadium projects connected with Euro 2012 in Poland – was drawn up. Its enforcement is now monitored by PL.2012.

As regards Ukraine, our partner in organising Euro 2012, I had met with its Family, Youth and Sports Minister Yuriy Pavlenko, chairman of the national agency for Euro 2012 preparations Yevhen Chervonenko and Hryhorij Surkis, the president of Ukraine's soccer federation. The PL.2012 company attended the signing in Kyiv by the Polish government delegation of an agreement on cooperation between both countries in preparations for EURO 2012. Polish and Ukrainian cooperation programme coordinators will have a meeting in April to define the details. UEFA hopes that the two countries will exchange their experiences in Euro 2012 project management to the best advantage

Q: How about taking advantage of the expertise of organizers of Euro 2004, Euro 2008 and World Cup 2006?

A: Our company intends to make the fullest use of experiences of countries which hosted the European Football Championships and other major sports events in the past. We don't have enough time and cannot afford a trial and error approach. I have already met with past sports event organizers in Germany, Belgium and Portugal. Combining the knowledge of our experts with that of others is bound to guarantee Euro 2012 success. We plan several planes of cooperation. Our staff will be watching Euro preparations in Austria and Switzerland on the spot. We will be inviting experts in respective fields of endeavour to assist us in our work also on a contract basis. Germany has experience in building stadiums fast, Austria and Switzerland are expert in logistics and event organization, Portugal in promoting tourism. We want to learn from them all.

Q: Preparations for Euro 2012 surely provide a splendid opportunity for investors...

A: That's for sure. Euro is the third largest sports event anywhere. Euro 2012 means a civilizational leap for Poland and Ukraine. During the next four years, these two countries will turn into vast construction sites. We estimate that 750 million euros will be spent in Poland on building and modernising sports stadiums, EUR

1.5 billion for the construction of five and four star hotels, PLN 2.5 billion for expanding airport capacity. Plans for the next few years envisage the construction in this country of 930 km of motorways and 2100 km of fast roads. EUR 67 million is to flow into Poland from the European Union. That all offers vast opportunities for investors.

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