

Who will promote Poland abroad?

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The Polish Entrepreneurship Congress has called on the government to set up one agency specialised in promoting the Polish economy abroad.

'Contrary to its successful economic performance and sound democratic institutions, Poland is perceived as a corrupted, bureaucratic country and without a market economy' Dariusz Witkowski of the Confederation of Polish Employers, said. 'Made in Poland is not a brand indicating good quality and competitiveness. Why is that when the reality in Poland is much better than its image abroad?' he asked. Witkowski underlined that only 1 in 7 entrepreneurs who are looking to invest in Poland decide to do so, which means that Poland is attracting less than 15% of the FDI it potentially could. He explained that this situation is largely caused by the lack of a comprehensive strategy executed by one agency. 'There are over 60 institutions working on promoting the Polish economy and spending over PLN 100 million per year, yet Poland is ranked at the 53rd position in terms of competitiveness according to the World Economic Forum and at 32nd position in terms of tourism competitiveness.'

Entrepreneurs believe these poor results are the effect of uncoordinated actions, therefore they are asking for one agency, predominantly financed by the government. However, businesspeople say they need to play a crucial role in developing and executing the promotion strategy, therefore they are also ready to contribute financially to it.

Ronald Rewald, Chairman of the Polish-American Chamber of Commerce, underlined that there are some excellent examples set by Germany and the UK how to promote a country's economy abroad. Martin Oxley of the British-Polish Chamber of Commerce said that the UK earmarks over GBP 200 million per year for

promotion but each pound sterling spent generates 6 pounds of revenue.

Jerzy Bartnik, president of the Polish Crafts Association, summed up what a coherent strategy should contain. 'We should promote the Polish economy abroad, Polish businesses and Polish brands, we should promote Polish exports, FDIs in Poland and Polish investments abroad. And businesspeople should play a vital role in those activities' he said. (SJ)

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