

SEMINAR 'DOING BUSINESS WITH POLAND

Thursday 22nd October 2009 - Malta Enterprise, Industrial Estate, San Gwann

Speech by Mr Alan Camilleri, Executive Chairman

Distinguished Counsellor, Ms Turek, ladies and gentlemen

I would like to welcome you and the Polish delegation to Malta Enterprise. It is indeed our pleasure to host today's seminar, particularly since at the beginning of this year, Malta Enterprise led an accompanying business delegation on the margins of a State Visit to Poland by the then President of Malta, Dr Edward Fenech Adami.

It is worth noting that this particular delegation numbering 56 local entrepreneurs was the largest ever outgoing business delegation. The presence here today of a good number of Maltese entrepreneurs demonstrates that our business community considers Poland as a country with great potential for inward and outward investment and trade. In this spirit, we are eager to develop closer commercial links to the benefit of both economies.

Malta offers a unique value proposition as an EU Member State. Its strategic location within the Mediterranean basin, with long standing close political, trade and social relations to Southern Europe, North Africa and the Middle East complements that of Poland with its neighbouring countries at the rim of the Baltic Sea and the developed economies to the West. While our size differs in almost ridiculous proportions, the Maltese and Polish market landscape and developmental stage, can complement each other in that both can provide a foothold for market access into neighbouring regions which are otherwise more difficult to penetrate.

There are a number of areas of potential growth in our business relations. Trade, investment, tourist flows and real estate are all areas of focus. We also welcome more Polish business people to invest, do business and exploit Malta's position as a financial, educational, trading, logistics, and high-tech manufacturing hub in the Mediterranean region.

Malta can also be a valuable springboard from which Polish businesses could venture into North Africa and the Middle Eastern markets. In this context, we encourage the formation of clusters and consortia who can together build synergies to systematically tackle these emerging and highly lucrative markets.

The accession of Malta and Poland to the EU in May 2004 has also been economically beneficial to both countries. It has simplified trade exchanges and investment flows. Statistical figures indicate that bilateral exchanges have almost doubled since EU membership but are still well below what is desirable. The removal of border controls, subsequent to the two countries accession to the Schengen Area, allowing free travel without any bureaucratic obstacles is yet another positive element towards enhancing tourism and business encounters. Moreover, we do believe that the changeover to the euro as our currency has fully integrated Malta into the single market and given our country increasing solidity as a trading partner. In this context, Polish business could utilise the euro platform provided by Malta to secure their investments and capitalise on their trade exchanges with third countries.

The signing of an MOU between Malta Enterprise and the Confederation of Polish Employers should strengthen existing relations in the exchange of trade information and business opportunities between the two countries. I would wish to emphasise that the importance of such Memoranda is less in their signing than in their maintenance and follow-up to ensure that our organisations fulfil their mission of being a catalyst for business and enterprise development in our respective economies.

Allow me to conclude my brief remarks by thanking the Polish Delegation especially the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Rome, the Polish Ministry of the Economy, the Confederation of Polish Employers and the Maltese Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their efforts in coordinating today's business seminar.

I sincerely hope that today's event will mean business in all senses. I wish you a fruitful day.