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Export of Polish commodities, Polish food brands abroad

POLISH EXPORTERS HAVE FACED AND PREVAILED AGAINST MAJOR CHALLENGES IN THE PAST FEW YEARS. NOW THEY ARE LOOKING AT GREAT OPPORTUNITIES SUCH AS THE INTRODUCTION OF CETA

Poland has become a leading European food exporter. In 2016 exports of foodstuffs reached a record value of over €24 billion, i.e. more than PLN 100 billion. This upward trend is expected to continue in 2017. It is worth emphasizing that the positive results in Polish exports were achieved despite such trade obstacles as the Russian embargo (in force since 2014) and the Chinese ban on the import of Polish pork meat (introduced in response to the fear of African Swine Flu).

Such positive results clearly show that Poland has learned to enjoy the benefits of the Common market. Indeed, over 80 percent of all exported Polish food products was destined for other EU markets. The majority of Polish commodities were purchased by German, British and Czech consumers. Among the best-selling products were: meat and meat products (especially poultry), dairy products, confectionery, cereal, fruit and vegetables.

Notwithstanding the above, Polish food producers are not confining their search for commercial partners to the EU. Last year the biggest recipients of Polish food in eastern markets were Belarus, Saudi Arabia and Hong Kong. Is this a good direction? Certainly. Polish entrepreneurs should seek the chance to increase their presence on the markets of developing countries. Taking into account signals of protectionism already present in certain European countries and increasing competition

in the common market, focusing on African or Asian countries would undoubtedly be a good idea. Polish producers have absolutely nothing to be ashamed of. Foreign customers appreciate Polish agri-food products not only for the great price-quality ratio but also for their perceived safety and good taste.

An interesting perspective for Polish food exports occurred in the light of CETA – the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement signed between Canada and the EU. CETA was signed on October 30, 2016 in Brussels. It has already been approved by the European Parliament, but in order to fully enter into force, it has to be ratified by the parliaments of all member states. It will obviously take some time. Before it occurs, CETA will apply only in its commercial aspect. Canada, with its considerable market, constitutes a good sales outlet for Polish food producers. Most products from the agri-food industry will now be exported to Canada duty-free. This applies to, among others, fruit and vegetables, wine industry products and spirits or traditional products with protected geographical indications. According to a recent joint communication of the President of the European Commission and the Prime Minister of Canada, CETA will partially enter into force in September 2017.

Considering the above, Poland undoubtedly stands a chance to strengthen its position in international markets. Given the promising trend, Poland should already be considered one of the most interesting food industry markets to invest in.●

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