

At Focus: **POLAND**

„The pressure on training and qualification is rising“

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Questions for the colleague **Marek Albecki** about the results of the crisis for the Polish wood and furniture industry and about trade union fields of activity?

➡ Since 2009, the global economic and financial crisis has also significantly influenced the wood and furniture industry. Which were the economic results had the crisis on the enterprises and the sector in your country and what are the current developments?

Economic consequences are order's fall that is favour of revenues. Crisis are noticeable in employers diminish and not sufficient covers the orders on work week.

➡ What are the results of the economic crisis on the employment in the sector? What are the negative trends – for example for jobs, working hours, salaries and the work standards in the enterprises?

The number of employees has decreased. Group dismissal, cancelled the bonus, premium etc., efforts to decrease pays.

➡ How have the trade unions dealt with the crisis? What were your instruments and strategies to secure jobs and protect the employees? How successful you have been?

The trade unions constantly struggle for the security and preservation of any job, although the danger of enterprise bankruptcy has increased during the crisis. The number of bankruptcies in the Polish furniture sector has significantly increased. We see the company dangers and unfortunately we have to agree to compromises in a few regards, but in the negotiations, we fight for the preservation of jobs. Our trade union defended the salary level which was supposed to be decreased by over 30 %. We also defended the company-based social services funds. In addition, we have also used the instruments of reduced working times without salary cuts



Solidarność

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and used entitlements from the collective wage agreements. These are successful activities in the interest of our colleagues

➡ How do the trade unions act to successfully represent the interests of employees (like secure jobs, good work standards and collective wage agreement salaries) even under the conditions of the crisis? What are your main approaches on company and sector level?

In the future, we could continue with past actions and lay stress on the need for more training (for example negotiating training, management training etc.)

➡ The European and international competition in the wood and furniture sector will remain significant in the future even after the crisis. Many companies have to improve their products and qualities. What is the importance of vocational further training of the employees in this context?

Demand for workers educated in wood/furniture sector, because workers uneducated, haven't suitable knowledge.

➡ How important is the topic “qualification” in your work in companies and the sector as a whole? What has improved and where do you still have deficits?

Qualification in our company-trained workers to go back to vocational schools, technical wood and studios. As well as working staff retrained in other professions in the profession of a carpenter. Improvement of the machinery requires increasingly complex skills and knowledge that is constantly raising the qualifications of the employees have.

➡ **Are there trade union or company initiatives for a systematic and improved further training of the employees in the wood and furniture sector?**

In our company is expecting pressure on qualification rise. We have make the trainings. Qualification has gone up because machine park's requirement was change.

➡ **What are your expectations towards the European cooperation in the project INNO 2? What kind of results do you expect in the context of the topic "further training"?**

I expect solid conclusion from hard situation of wood and furniture industry in Europe. I expect results, that create remedying measures from European parliament. Creation one strategy in furniture industry, and measures to stop import furniture from Asia. In my opinion it's worth doing the training to educated workers.

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