

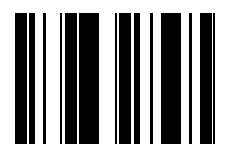
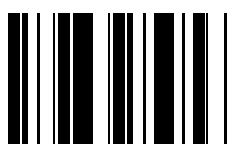


MADE IN POLSKA

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KRZYSZTOF ŻYWCZAK

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INTRODUCTION

One contemporary measure of a country's popularity among citizens of the world would be the number of foreign tourists who decide to visit it, and the popularity of goods manufactured in that country in the global market.

WELCOME TO POLAND

Results of a survey conducted by the Polish Tourist Organisation (PTO) concerning the year 2013 confirmed that the satisfaction of foreign tourists visiting Poland remains high. It was estimated at 4.1 on a five-point scale. Citizens of countries with long membership in the European Union are the most willing to recommend visiting Poland to their friends. In their view, Poland is worth visiting because of its beautiful countryside, attractive heritage, delicious cuisine, and relatively low price of services in comparison to Western Europe.

The number of foreigners coming to Poland is steadily increasing. According to data collected

and processed by the PTO in 2013, 72 295 000 visitors arrived to Poland that year, of which 15 815 000 were tourists. Among the tourists the dominant group were citizens of the old EU (Germans, British, Dutch, Austrians, Italians, French, and Swedish). Poland hosted 8 020 000 citizens of these countries in that year. Tourists from new EU countries (Czechs, Slovaks, Lithuanians, Latvians and Hungarians) were definitely in the minority and their number amounted to 1 835 000. The number of Ukrainian tourists reached 2 110 000, which was more than the total number of visitors arriving from the new EU countries surveyed. The number of Belarusian tourists was also high and equalled 1 530 000.

MADE IN POLAND

Customers worldwide are increasingly willing to purchase goods with the “Made in Poland” label. In 2013, the value of Polish exports amounted to almost one hundred and fifty-three billion euros, which is the best result ever recorded. In comparison with the result from the previous year, also a record high one, sales increased by 6.5%, including an 11.5% increase in the sale of foodstuffs. The financial effect of this trend is a positive balance of trade in foodstuffs, which, in comparison with 2012, has increased by one-third and amounted to over 5.7 billion euros.

Polish products are bought most willingly in the European Union, which receives two thirds of all Polish exports. Poland’s main business partner in Europe is Germany, which has spent over thirty-eight billion euros on Polish products. There is a growing demand for Polish products in the Great Britain, the Czech Republic and countries outside of the European Union, mainly the United States and Norway, as well as Russia, Belarus and Ukraine.

Especially noteworthy is the popularity of Polish foodstuffs, which are in high demand not only in Europe, but also worldwide. They are highly appreciated in the European Union, especially in Germany. The EU receives 78% of food exports from Poland and German consumers spent 4.5 billion euros on Polish food. The second place was taken by the United Kingdom (1.5 billion euros), and third by Russia (1.2 billion euros). Among the leaders terms of the value of Polish food purchased were the Czech Republic, France, Italy, Netherlands, and Slovakia.

“Our top exports are mushroom and rye. Their crops are the highest in the European Union; rye crops are the highest in the world. The second most popular exports are potatoes and apples. Recently, Poland has become the world’s leading producer of these crops; in almost every corner of the globe Eve can tempt her Adam with a fruit picked from a Polish tree. Poland also produces significant quantities of sugar beet and is at the forefront (third place) of pig breeding business in the EU. Polish poultry farms are among the largest in the European Union. The country is the fourth largest producer of wheat, oilseed rape, tobacco, and cow’s milk. In the years of plenty (most recently in 2010) Polish currant crops accounted for 30% of the global output, and raspberry crops made up 20% of the global output. Polish cheese is increasingly successful in global markets – it accounts for about 3.6% of global output” (Jan Janowski, *Polski eksport 2013 – ponad 150 mld euro! (Polish exports in 2013 – more than 150 billion euros!)*).

TOP EXPORTS

Polish products are sold all over the world, and Polish economy, contrary to what the eternal malcontents stubbornly preach, is becoming more and more innovative, as is illustrated by the numerous examples of excellent Polish products mentioned in this book. Poland’s top modern export products, are recognised as symbols of quality in their categories, and their good reputation is

projected onto the country in which they were manufactured. There was not enough space in this book to include everything we wanted to cover at greater length, so we have allowed ourselves here to just mention what most deserves to be remembered.

Few countries can threaten Poland's position as a leading manufacturer of furniture, which is exported to one hundred and sixty countries. Up to 90% of furniture made in Poland is sold abroad. Polish factories produce more than thirty million couches, sofas, armchairs, and chairs per year. These products have become its main specialty. It is worth noting that almost half the furniture sold at Ikea was produced in Poland. Polish furniture makers: Black Red White, Nowy Styl, Szynaka Meble, Vox, and Kler are also conquering foreign markets. The latter, which specialises in the production of luxury furniture, caters to the tastes and needs of the world's richest and most powerful people. This is what the owner, Piotr Kler, said about their customers: "Putin bought two furniture sets from us. As we accidentally found out, Leonid Kuchma, the former President of Ukraine, also has Kler furniture – I saw the furniture in pictures from the visit of President Aleksander Kwaśniewski to President Kuchma's summer residence. Initially, we didn't know who it was destined for – orders for the head of the state are placed by interior design companies, which do not reveal who their client is."

Our clothing and shoe manufacturers are very successful. Clothes from Reserved, Cropp, House, Mohito and Sinsay brands, which are owned by Gdańsk-based company LPP, can be purchased in numerous showrooms (over one thousand three hundred)

in twelve countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Shoes from CCC, Boti and Lasocki, which are brands belonging to Poland's largest group of shoe manufacturers, CCC, are worn by people in Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Turkey, Germany, Latvia, Romania, Ukraine and Kazakhstan. More than seven hundred stores of the company are located in these countries. Shoe brands Wojas, Gino Rossi, Bartek, and Gucio are also doing well. Famous people like as Gwyneth Paltrow, Angelina Jolie, and Brad Pitt buy Gucio shoes for their children.

Polish cosmetics have an excellent reputation. Colourful eyeshadows, blushers, powders, lipsticks, concealers and eyebrow products by Przemyśl-based manufacturer Inglot are bought by women in more than fifty countries on six continents. Inglot has about four hundred and fifty stores, including a huge showroom in New York. Other producers are also highly successful. Ziaja, based in Gdańsk, has a portfolio of nine hundred cosmetics and pharmaceuticals, and sells its products all over the world, in countries like the Czech Republic, Lithuania, the Philippines, Chile, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam. Sopot-based Oceanic, the owner of several brands of hypoallergenic cosmetics offered in the AA line, sends its products to nearly thirty countries. Dr Irena Eris enjoys international acclaim in the luxury cosmetics industry.

Huge success was achieved by InPost, which owns the world's largest network of terminals for dispatch and collection of shipments, owning more than three and a half thousand parcel lockers in twenty countries, including Poland and the Czech Republic,

Great Britain, Estonia, Ireland, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovakia, Ukraine, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Chile, Australia, El Salvador, and Guatemala.

One of the most spectacular commercial and branding successes in recent years was achieved by Polish computer game developers. Titles such as *The Witcher*, *Dead Island*, *Painkiller*, *Sniper Ghost Warrior* or *Call for Juarez* are recognised by computer game fans around the world. *The Witcher*, developed by Warsaw-based CD Projekt, occupies a special position in this list. The two editions of the game released so far have sold in seven million copies worldwide. In 2014,

an initiative by Prime Minister Donald Tusk, who in 2011 presented Barack Obama with *Witcher 2*, had a curious sequel. During the President of the United States' visit to Poland in June 2014, on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the elections on 4 June 1989, Obama referred to the gift he received a few years ago and said: "When I was here last time, Donald gave me a gift; a video game produced in Poland, which has won fans all around the world, called *The Witcher*. I admit that I'm not very good at games, but I know that it's a perfect example of Poland's contribution to the new global economy."



Poland is the world leader in the production of amber jewellery (controlling 70% of the market)



FOLK HANDICRAFTS

The products of folk artists and craftspeople are very popular among foreign tourists coming to Poland – they serve as original, colourful souvenirs of their visit into the country. Polish people are also developing ineterests in authentic folk art. In the People's Republic of Poland, appreciation of folk art was promoted by the communist regime was the duty of every citizen, which naturally provoked resistance. Artwork in Cepelia-style was regarded as the epitome of artifice and poor taste. Today, regional artists no longer need to subject themselves to central management, and customers willingly buy the objects they produce. In the contest announced in 2009 by Cepelia for new souvenirs from Poland inspired by the folk tradition four hundred and seventy-seven artists submitted eight hundred ninety-four works, which proves that folk art is in renaissance. The artists combined traditional designs and materials with contemporary trends in original and surprising ways. The jury awarded Bogusław Śliwiński's embroidered coasters and the phone pouch made of Koniaków lace by Beata Legierska top places. They also enjoyed the jigsaw puzzles with folk costumes, USB sticks in wooden colourfully painted bird-shaped cases, and flip flops, laptop bags, and gingerbread moulds made with the application of cutout techniques.

CUTOUTS FROM ŁOWICZ REGION

Although various types of cutouts are known in the traditions of various nations (Scandinavia, Germany, Switzerland, Slovakia), nowhere outside Poland have they developed to this extent; nowhere have they been purely folk art, closely related to the cultural panorama of rural life. For this reason, ethnographers regard them as an exclusively Polish art form. Intricate cutouts from Łowicz have for decades been among the most popular souvenirs from Poland. And this is no surprise; their colours and patterns are delightful and they are made with amazing creativity and precision. They were first made in various regions of the country in the middle of the 19th century, when coloured glossy paper appeared on the market. At first they were used to decorate homes



Circular cutout with roosters



Cutout with a peacock pattern.
This type of decoration will
enliven apartment walls

and were hung on walls and ceiling beams. They were discovered by painter Leonard Stroynowski, who noticed them during the renovation of the church in Złaków Kościelny near Łowicz; he was fascinated by them immediately, and assembled a substantial collection in a short time, which he then presented in 1901 at an exhibition in Kraków. In order to be considered a cutout a creatively cut paper form must meet one essential criterion: it must be made with coloured glossy paper only. Use of white paper is not allowed.

Cutouts were and are made in many regions of Poland. Well known and appreciated are those created in Kurpie, Sieradz and Lublin regions, and in the areas around Opoczno and Warsaw. However, those made in Łowicz region are the most popular. As the colourful layers are stuck on top of one another, they are sometimes called "stick-ons."



Traditional Łowicz *tasiemka*

Cutouts from each region have their own specific features. Three types can be distinguished in the Łowicz region:

- ***kodra*** – colourful cutouts placed on elongated rectangular sheets of white paper. They occurred in two varieties – floral and pictorial. They were usually hung on ceiling beams.
- ***tasiemki*** – cutouts made on two identical paper ribbons glued together, with houndstooth pattern at the ends. Intersections were decorated with flowers, stars or semicircles. *Tasiemki* were usually hung between holy images.
- ***gwiozda*** – coloured forms with floral, zoomorphic and anthropomorphic motifs on a white paper circle with irregular edges. “These were mostly placed on the beams between *kodras*, and could also be attached to the ends of ribbons” (Joanna Radziejewicz, *Wycinanka ludowa – polska specjalność* (Folk cutouts – a Polish speciality)).



Large cutout from Łowicz with a rooster pattern