

INTERNATIONAL COTTON ADVISORY COMMITTEE

62nd PLENARY SESSION

THE WORLD COTTON DEVELOPMENTS & RENEDES

8-12 September 2003, GDANSK – POLAND

www.cotton.org.pl

WELCOME WORDS

Dear delegates and Guests of ICAC

On behalf of the Government of Poland I have a great honour to invite you to the 62nd Plenary Session of the International Cotton Advisory Committee (ICAC). The event will take place on 8 - 12 September 2003 in Gdansk - one of the oldest, most charming and beautiful towns in Poland - with its fascinating architecture and tradition.

Organisation of ICAC annual session in Poland is a remarkable event not only for Poland but for the whole Europe, too. Please notice, that since 11 years Poland will have been the first cotton consuming country to organise the ICAC Annual Session. In this unique situation we wish to present the expectations and needs of cotton market from the point of view of manufacturers and consumers.

What does Poland offer the visitors? We want to acquaint you with the beautiful region of Gdansk Pomerania from the "amber coast" of Vistula Spit at the Baltic Sea through the charming landscapes of Kashubian Lake District - often called "Kashubian Switzerland" - with its forests, mosaic of hills and lakes sculptured by the Scandinavian continental glacier.

As the Chairman of the Organising Committee, I sincerely hope, you will be able to attend the 62nd Plenary Session of ICAC, to share your opinions and experiences of the difficult and ever-changing world of cotton.

We are looking forward to welcome you in Gdansk in September 2003.

Jacek Piechota
Minister of Economy

For further information on the 62nd Plenary Session of the ICAC please contact:

GDANSK 2003 ICAC PLENARY SESSION ORGANISING COMMITTEE

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The theme of the 62nd Plenary Session of the International Cotton Advisory Committee in Gdansk, Poland is **The World of Cotton - Developments & Remedies**.

Huge amounts of financial resources, innovation, engineering effort, material, technological progress, organizational improvements, and human resources have been invested in the WORLD of COTTON - the perfect, marvellous, natural and practical fibre.

- What are the dreams, aspirations and expectations of those involved in all segments of the cotton production and processing stream?
- Will the cotton industry gain a competitive edge over the aggressive expansion of chemical fibres?
- Can the cotton industry expect better performance from each sector, and will investors earn good returns on capital?
- Will cotton producers, traders, processors and customers remain loyal to the fibre?

Hosted by the Government of Poland and organised by the Gdynia Cotton Association (GCA), in consultation with the Secretariat and the Standing Committee of the ICAC the 62nd Plenary Meeting of the International Cotton Advisory Committee will address enter ' issues facing cotton agencies, organisations, and industry segments, including traders and researchers.

Government representatives and experts will examine critical factors affecting higher yields, improved quality of cotton fibre, growth in cotton trade and turnover, expansion in cotton processing, and improvements in transport, forwarding and cargo control. The Plenary Meeting will also examine factors leading to optimal performance in the ever more complicated technological and business environments affecting cotton - related industries.

Participants will include both advisors and major decision makers in all sectors of the world cotton industry. Discussions will identify favourable and unfavourable symptoms, study cases, develop a diagnosis of current problems and provide an outlook of newest industry developments. In this way, the 62nd Plenary Meeting of the ICAC will provide guidance on how to encourage growth in the world of cotton in the midst of turbulent global markets.

WHAT SHOULD YOU KNOW ABOUT POLAND

LOCATED IN THE CENTER OF EUROPE on the border of adjacent cultures of the West and the East, throughout the centuries Poland has been the country crossed by transit routes. The famous "Amber Route" run on the Polish lands on which those arriving from the frosty North had been meeting with merchants from Europe, Asia and Africa.

POLITICAL SURROUNDING - In the decade of 1980 - 1990, Poland and Gdansk particularly had been the centre of political great events which changed the order of the 20th century Europe. Here, the trends and ideas commencing the fall of the Soviet Union and announcing the changes of the political structure of the world were born.

INHABITANTS ca. 40 mln of people places Poland within the most densely populated countries in Europe.

ECONOMY - modern industry, well developed in all respects, with stable high position. Textile industry, including the cotton one, is a remarkable element of the Polish industrial landscape, supported by numerous research and scientific centres. It is concentrated mainly in the central part of the country - the Lodz Region.

EUROPEAN UNION - the process of adapting the Polish legislation and economy to the requirements of the European Union is in progress. Poland's future membership in the Union means for the Polish enterprises some new possibilities of development, but also increases requirements and threats.

TOURISTIC OFFER of Poland encompasses diversified propositions directed so much to fans of active forms of relaxation, as well as to those who prefer to admire the amber treasures of the Polish coast or to hear Chopin.

Beginnings of textile industry in Poland, based on cotton processing, go back to the 20th of the 19th century. Since that time, spinning mills in Lodz and then in the South of Poland had been founded. Until the Civil War in the United

States, they had been processing almost exclusively American cotton and insignificant quantities of cotton from Egypt and India. The American fibre had been replaced with that from Asian part of the Russian Empire. Polish cotton products successfully competed on the international markets with those from England, Germany and Russia.

After WW I, a further development of Polish cotton industry was progressing, basing on American, Egyptian, Indian and South American cotton. Since 1929 cotton had been entering Poland through the modern sea-port of Gdynia, built in the 20s'. Taking into consideration the facts above and aiming at securing their own interests as well as the possibility of settling disputes (technical and quality ones), the Polish cotton business circles established in 1955 the Gdynia Cotton Association.

WW II destroyed ca. 40% of the cotton industry in Poland and due to the changes in political situation of this region of Europe, Polish textile industry was nationalised and the basic source of supplies was raw material from the former Soviet Union.

Since 1989 the cotton sector, as well as the whole Polish economy have been subject to the tough trial of political-economical changes. As the part of free `market, this sector does not enjoy any governmental preferences or; subsidies. The re-structuring of the Polish cotton mills has been still lasting. Cotton trade was privatised most quickly - since 10 years it has been completely in private hands. Re-structurisation and privatisation of industry requires more time and a vast capital, but in spite of this, last years have been b considerable progress in this scope.

The attention should also he paid to the fact that the technological and designing levels presented by Polish factories are matching latest world trends. The degree of integration of the Polish cotton and textile industry with the European Union is much higher when compared with other sectors. Constant modernising as well as flexible reactions to changes taking place on the international markets are the must of this industry. Adapting process results also in meaningful ownership changes, which - particularly in textile and light industries - have progressed very quickly.

Gdansk city attracts, fascinates and surprises. For centuries, Gdansk has formed a conglomerate of nations - Germans, Poles, Dutchmen, Frenchmen, Scotsmen and even Tartars added the fragments of their own traditions to that mosaic. As a member of Hansa - a medieval merchant association of European cities - the place developed with ` trade, art, different culture, traditions and religions, that focused here.

The fame of Gdansk as, one of the most important transit ports serving the transport between the East and the West goes back to the Middle Ages. During the years, Gdansk was the centre for re-loading of raw materials and it still remains an important place for trade between the countries of the Baltic Sea Basin.

Gdansk is seated in one of the largest and most varied regions of the Polish lowlands. Historically called Gdansk Pomerania, the region consists of several areas, as the Slowinskie Coast with the fantastic Slowinski National, Park), Hel Peninsula, Kashubian Lake District and Vistula Spit - the "amber coast" of the Polish seashore. Described as "chequered land», because of its characteristic half-timbered type of unique rural architecture, Kashubian beautiful countryside with its old water-mills, windmills and villages creates the landscape of the exceptional value.

What is amber? Fossilised resin, formed about 40 million years before the, appearance of mankind, is really, beautiful, has a pleasant smell and is warm in touch. Differs in structure, very often contains embedded traces of ancient life like insects and plants trapped in the resin.

Called the Baltic gold, amber was mined around Gdansk, in the Zulawy depression and along the Vistula Bar several thousands years BC. An object of trade, it contributed to the emergence of the famous Amber Routes. One of them, linking the Vistula mouth with ancient Greece, was already known in 1800 BC. A 4500 year-old Neolithic amber centre was discovered in Zulawy.

Gdansk region is the world's heart of amber crafts. The first amber masters' guild was formed in Gdansk in 1477. The Gdansk monopoly on trade of this mineral in the 16th and 17th centuries and magnificent development of amber crafts from the late 17th and throughout 18th centuries established Gdansk as the European centre of amber art. In Gdansk alone there are above 300 amber galleries and shops.

All the tours and social programme will be arranged by tour operator ORBIS TRAVEL, Gdansk. As most of delegates are expected to arrive via Warsaw airport - we arrange for them the special proposal of sightseeing of Warsaw - the 700 years' old capital of our country and places in its neighbourhood - Zelazowa Wola - birthplace of the world famous Polish composer Fryderyk Chopin, where you can hear the beautiful piano concert of his compositions.

For our guests, who decide to stay longer, we would like to suggest visiting magic Krakow with the beautiful Old Town and Wawel Castle - the old Polish kings' seat: We would like to propose you also visiting some peculiarities of the Gdansk region. One of them is, for instance:

The water tour along the unparalleled authentic relic of the art of civil engineering in the open days forms the most interesting in-land water route in Poland. It is the only system of this kind in the world, where original slipway installations are still in perfect working condition. All along the way tourists have the opportunity to experience direct contact with nature - the picturesque landscape dotted with game and numerous waterfowl: grebes, wild ducks, geese, swans, egrets and cormorants.

SOCIAL PROGRAMME

For delegates, observers and social program participants we will offer - as a programme - the ***Welcome to Gdansk tour*** and ***Malbork Castle tour***.

The Malbork Castle is the largest brick fortress world wide and one of the most magnificent examples of original Gothic architecture. Stretching over 20 hectares of land it ranks among the top tourist attractions in Poland. Between late 13th and mid 15th centuries the castle and city of Malbork formed together one of the largest defence compounds of medieval Europe. Malbork was the main residence of the Grand Masters of St. Mary's Hospital Order of the German House, known in Poland as "Knights of the Cross". Nowadays, the Malbork fortress is still the centre of Medieval tradition. So called, ***Amno Domini 1410 Association*** - which was created by the group of knighthood fans, castle guides, historians supported by, the Malbork city authorities - organises the yearly medieval Knights Tournaments. In the Malbork Castle one can visit also the most famous ***Museum of Amber***.

The thousand years old Gdansk is considered to be the most monument-abounding city of the "Baltic Europe". Most of the monuments of Gdansk are placed near the heart of its Old Town District, around the Long Street with the monumental Maim Town Hall and with impressive Saint Mary's Cathedral in the neighbourhood.

One of the most often visited streets of Gdansk is Mariacka street with the great number of amber shops and workshops alongside. In the Museum of the History of Gdansk located in the Main City Hall one of the most interesting collection of amber nodules and artefacts is displayed.

Climate: Poland remains in the zone of the mild climates. The end of September is usually called "the golden Polish autumn", which shows the exceptional beauty of Polish forests, sparkling with gold and purple of the autumn colours. Temperatures range from +10 up to +18 degrees Centigrade. It is worth, however, remembering about the umbrellas...

Visas: Visas are required for most nationalities entering Poland. Polish embassies and consulates all over the world will guide you through all the needed visa procedures and forms. However, visitors from the countries – members of EU and from the U.S.A. do not undergo any formalities – valid passport is the only document required.

Time: Greenwich mean time minus 1 hour saving time

Language: English and German languages are widely spoken in Poland

ACCOMMODATION DIRECTIONS:

Hotel:

- ICAC delegates are invited to Hotel Mercure Hewelius, Gdansk in the neighbourhood of The Old Town.
- Hotel prices range between USD 220 (apartments) and USD 100 (singles) per night (B&B +VAT included).

Gdansk International Airport has direct connections with:

- Copenhagen, Denmark;
- Frankfurt and Hamburg, Germany;
- Warsaw International Airport, Poland.

Travel Services:

- the Tour Operator “Orbis Travel” offers
- sightseeing arrangements,
- reservation of air and railway tickets,
- assistance,
- car and bus rentals.

Further Details

Full details about prices of accommodation, hotel and conference facilities, detailed programme of pre- and post-conference tours and spouse will be provided in our next mailer, which will be issued in may 2003.