

# STAFF WANTED

## IMPACT OF THE LABOUR MARKET ON WAREHOUSE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT IN POLAND

June 2017



RESEARCH



**BNP PARIBAS  
REAL ESTATE**

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## Contact:

Anna Staniszevska, Head of Research & Consultancy,  
Central and Eastern Europe, BNP Paribas Real Estate

## Author:

Szymon Dołęga, Junior Consultant, Research & Consultancy,  
BNP Paribas Real Estate

In cooperation with Hays Poland and EMAG.



BNP Paribas Real Estate Poland Sp. z o.o.  
Atrium Tower, al. Jana Pawła II 25  
00-854 Warsaw, Poland  
Tel.: +48 22 653 44 00  
[www.realestate.bnpparibas.pl](http://www.realestate.bnpparibas.pl)

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# I N T R O D U C T I O N

## The logistics sector in Poland has never been better.



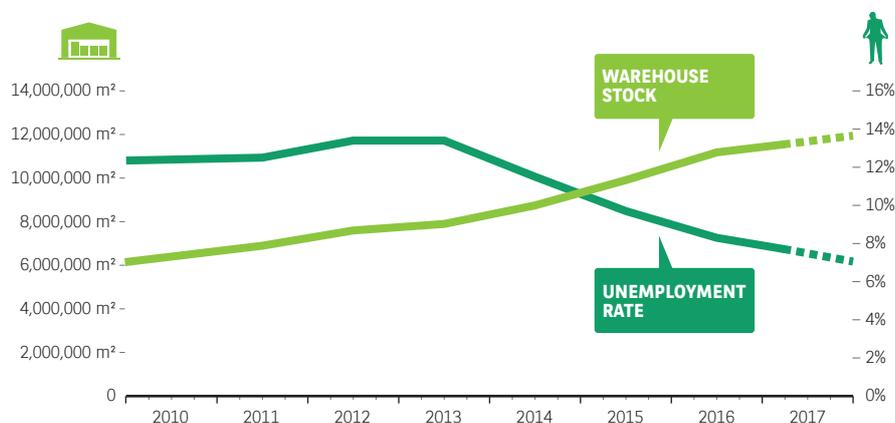
Anna  
Staniszezwska  
*Head of Research  
& Consultancy  
Central and Eastern  
Europe  
BNP Paribas Real  
Estate*

Supply of modern warehouse space is growing at a rate of several percent per year. Despite this, the vacancy rate remains at an extremely low level, and for many quarters now new schemes never have to wait long for tenants. A significant number of projects are leased at the moment of the symbolic ribbon-cutting. This largely comes from a high level of demand driven by constantly increasing consumption and the dynamic growth of e-commerce. The picture of the industry is completed when we add the undiminishing popularity of built-to-suit schemes in demand for example amongst organizations from the e-commerce sector.

On the other hand, we have to remember that one of the features of the warehouse and logistics sector is considerable demand for workforce. To grow, the majority of organizations need both qualified staff and extensive access to employees that perform simple tasks. What is the future of the industry given the lowest unemployment rate in 25 years? How does the current situation on the labour market impact the logistics sector and how do we tackle and prevent potential difficulties?

This report contains an analysis of the sector in light of the labour market and the current trends relating to its growth.

We invite you to enjoy reading our report.

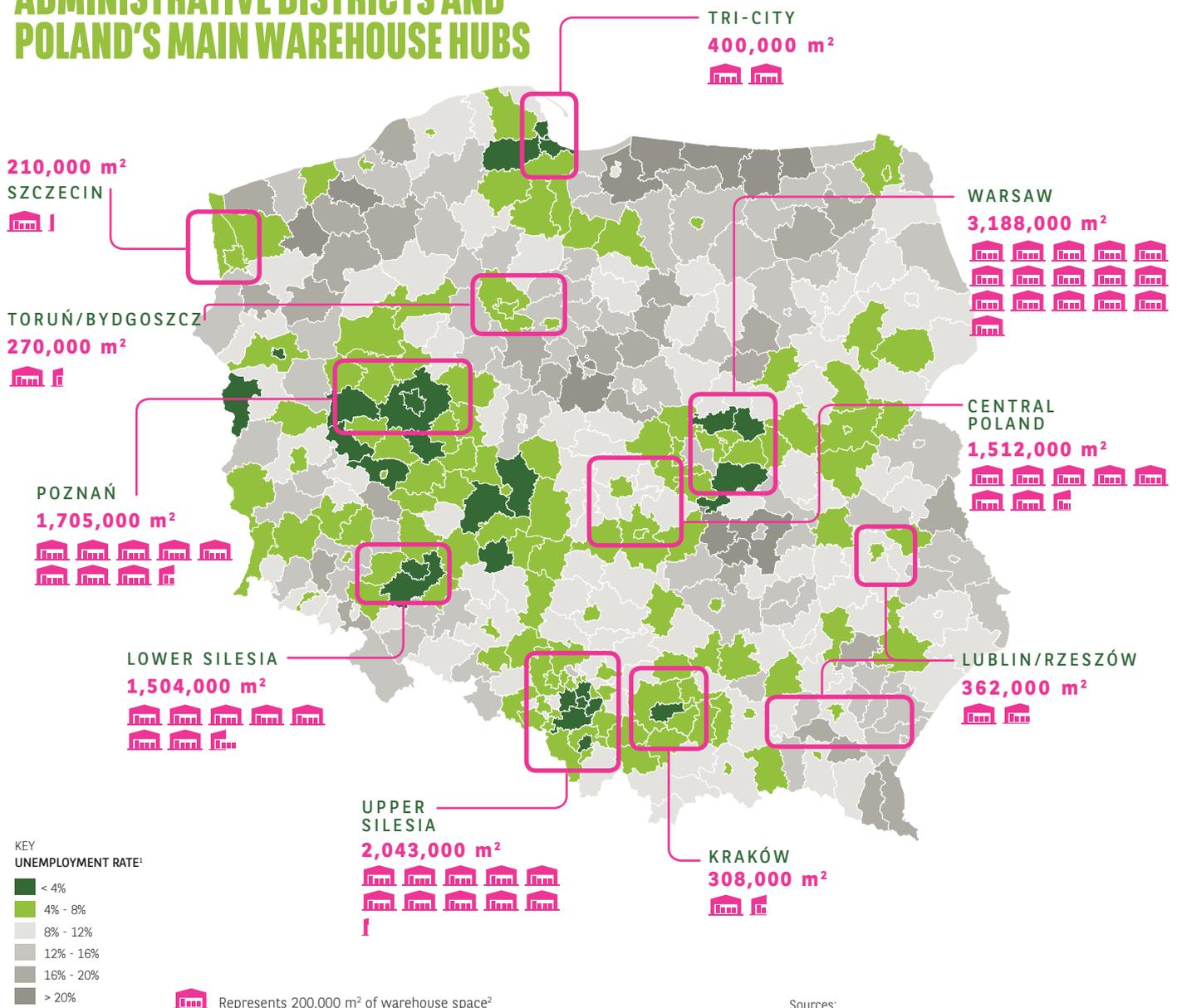


Source: GUS (the Central Statistical Office of Poland), BNP Paribas Real Estate

# WAREHOUSE MARKET IN POLAND

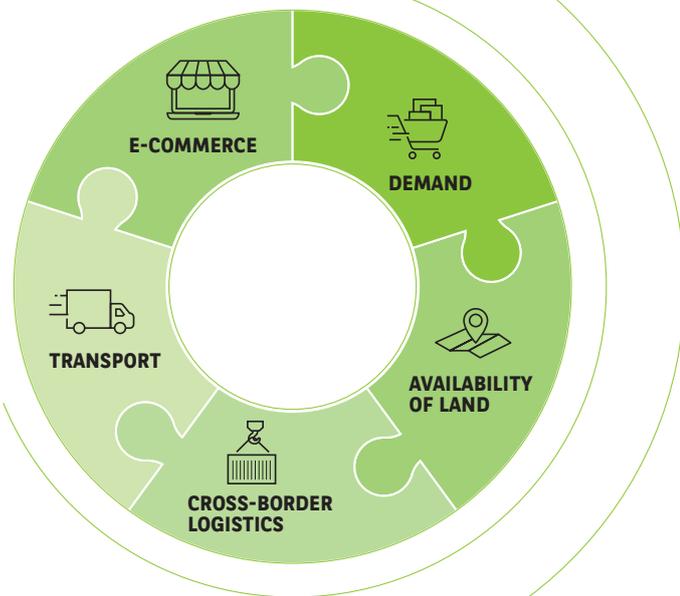
At the end of Q1 2017, total supply of modern warehouse space in Poland exceeded **11.5 million sqm**. This means that within one decade the stock increased more than twofold. The dynamic increase in the volume of space took place after 2013; since then the market grew by more than **48%**. The pace is certainly not going to slow down, as evidenced by the total size of all schemes currently under construction amounting to **1.3 million sqm**. Developers are undoubtedly encouraged by the low vacancy rate oscillating in the past few years around **6%**.

## UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICTS AND POLAND'S MAIN WAREHOUSE HUBS



Sources:  
1. GUS, as at May 2017  
2. BNP Paribas Real Estate, as at Q1 2017

# WHAT CONTRIBUTES TO THE CURRENT MARKET SITUATION?



## DEMAND

**Poland is the largest country in Central and Eastern Europe.** Year after year, the market with more than 38 million consumers is recording an increasing pace of growth of consumption in the private household sector (2.6% - 2014, 3.0% - 2015, 3.8% - 2016). Furthermore, May 2017 saw the best indices in history with respect to satisfaction of consumer needs as assessed by the Polish population. A survey drawn up by GUS (the Central Statistical Office of Poland) shows improved moods as regards the current and future consumption. Lower risk of job loss, general salary growth and implementation of the 500+ programme have to be named as the reason here.

## TRANSPORT

**One of the conditions necessary for the logistics industry to grow is well-developed road infrastructure.** Expansion of the network of express roads improves the effectiveness of cargo transport and contributes to emergence of new locations, which are attractive from the point of view of warehouse and logistics services. The fastest pace of motorway construction in Poland was recorded between 2011-2014 with more than 1,500 km of express roads completed, which nearly doubled their length across the country. Given that the abovementioned period directly preceded the boom in the warehouse and logistics sector that we are witnessing today, infrastructure developments have to be named as a significant factor contributing to the market's growth.

## E-COMMERCE

**E-commerce has become one of the dominating sectors that drive demand.** It is estimated that the e-commerce sector has yet again recorded a double-digit growth, which in 2016 came to 15%. In Q1 2017, the largest warehouse schemes under construction in Poland were built-to-suit projects for the e-commerce sector. They are: Panattoni BTS Amazon Szczecin (161,000 sqm), Panattoni BTS Amazon Sosnowiec (135,000 sqm) and Goodman BTS Zalando (130,000 sqm).

## AVAILABILITY OF LAND

**The winning asset held by Poland is the extensive availability of land that can be used for warehouse projects.** The majority of development companies active on the Polish market have procured so-called land banks, i.e. land that can be potentially used for construction of warehouse schemes. Moreover, local authorities are visibly more well-disposed towards financing or at least co-financing connections of the required utilities. Creation of new jobs and boosts in local budget coming from tax inflows persuade local governments to designate new areas for development of warehouse schemes.

## CROSS-BORDER LOGISTICS

**Poland, as a large consumer market with its continually modernized transport infrastructure and labour costs that are still low when compared to Western Europe, is becoming an attractive location for distribution centres run by companies operating in more than one country.** The best example here are the largest warehouse schemes in Poland developed around Szczecin, where the leading e-commerce operators have placed their operations. Another visible trend is construction of logistics facilities to the West of Poznań and Wrocław, i.e. locations that support efficient operations to Germany and the Czech Republic.

# POLAND WITHIN THE CEE REGION

## When will the market become saturated?

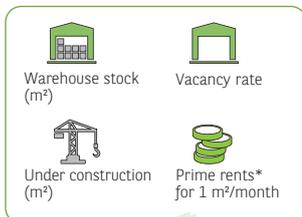
As the sector is growing rapidly, there arises a question as to when the market will become saturated: are we to expect it to happen in the nearest future or will we see equally dynamic growth over the coming years?

To some extent the answer to this question is provided through an analysis of the situation in other countries in the Central and Eastern Europe region. Demand for warehouse space is closely related to demand contingent on the size of the consumer market. The volume of warehouse space per capita in countries developed to a similar degree gives us a picture of the level of saturation on the various markets. The relatively low rate of density in Poland means that in the immediate future the market will remain absorbent with absorption of new space taking place exceptionally quickly.

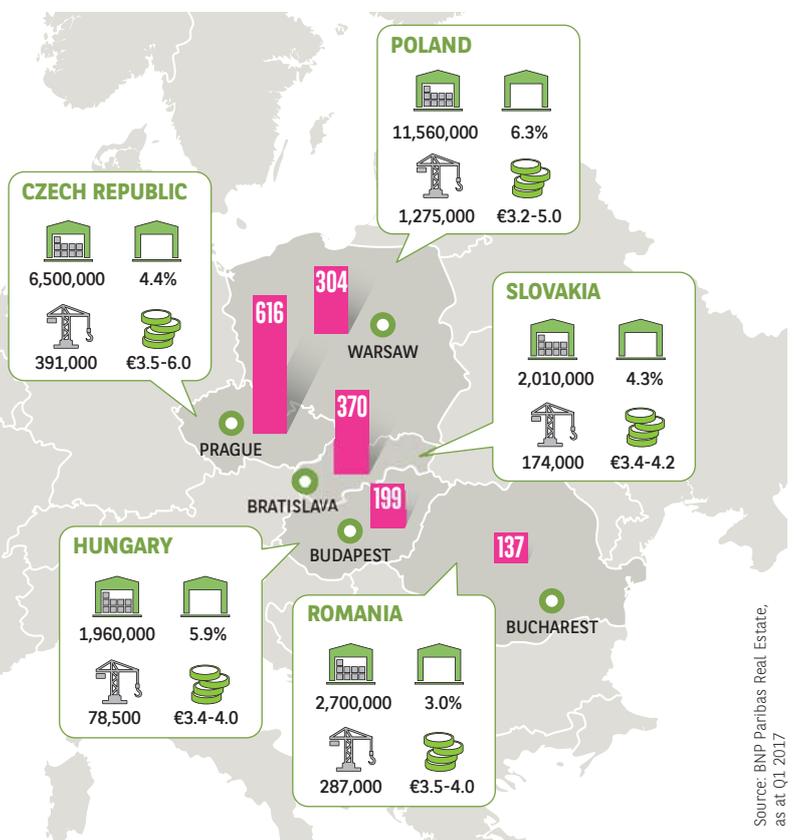
## WAREHOUSE MARKET IN THE CEE REGION

KEY

**304**  
VOLUME OF WAREHOUSE SPACE  
PER 1,000 RESIDENTS (m<sup>2</sup>)



\*Asking rents for modern warehouse space in the most attractive locations.



Source: BNP Paribas Real Estate, as at Q1 2017

**The undisputed majority of warehouse investments in Central and Eastern Europe are financed by foreign companies that most often already have a presence in Western Europe.**

Location and low labour costs meant that in ca. 2000 the Czech Republic became the first choice for international firms looking to place their warehouse facilities in the region. The area around Prague and later on other regions, following developments in the road infrastructure, started to develop into logistics hubs.

Low levels of saturation shows the potential of other more southerly Central and Eastern Europe countries, particularly when we take into account the fact that their population is becoming wealthier at an increasingly rapid pace.

Romania, due to its location and less developed road network, continues to be an underinvested market. However, in view of the current pace of development and the size of its population, the sector in this country has a chance to grow remarkably quickly.



# LABOUR MARKET IN POLAND

## As viewed by an HR industry expert

Coming to the end of Q2 2017 the positive market trends are continuing: the unemployment rate continues to fall and the majority of companies report further increase in employment numbers and planned investments.

### TERMS ARE DICTATED BY CANDIDATES

Polish labour market is growing dynamically, organizations are taking advantage of the positive market situation and increasing the number of staff employed while at the same time expanding in terms of geographical reach. Poland represents an attractive 'morsel to investors' and is amongst those European locations that tend to be more often chosen by business operators. The IT and modern technology market is growing at a particularly rapid pace, with many new jobs also emerging in the modern business service centres, the logistics sector and manufacturing companies. As regards the latter, in addition to a significant increase in the number of manufacturing labourers, we are now witnessing interesting trends in the direction of growth taken by engineering centres (active in product development and investment projects across EMEA and globally), which strengthens Poland's standing as a country with a large talent pool. Furthermore, the processing centralization trend is also undiminished – which is the most visible in accounting, finance, customer service and HR processes, and now increasingly often in respect of the supply chain processes.

The dynamic developments taking place on the labour market represent a great challenge to employers; it is difficult not only to attract new employees, but also retain them. 2017 is marked by a high level of recruitment activity on the part of organizations, which in turn strengthens the employee market with a wide-ranging selection of jobs awaiting them. The high level of competitiveness means that organizations are forced to fight for talent and then provide the staff employed with growth oppor-

tunities that will stop them from leaving. A benefit package that includes private medical care and a sports discount card is now becoming a norm frequently taken for granted by job candidates. On the other hand, they attach increasing importance to other benefits such as flexible working hours and remote work opportunities (even partially).

At the same time, those job candidates that are able to choose from amongst a number of job offers frequently have increased financial expectations as compared to their current earnings. Therefore, it is them that dictate the employment terms. This is a considerable challenge for future employers that do not wish to create a disparity in their teams between new staff and those that have been employed for many years. The dynamic movements in terms of earnings require firms to become flexible to a considerable extent and be ready for give-and-take solutions.

The number of counteroffers is also growing: employers aware of the difficulties in attracting suitable staff are increasingly ready to come up with a counteroffer to retain an employee that is considering moving jobs. However, it is possible that this will provide only a temporary solution to buy the employer the time necessary to find a new employee.

What can we do then to build our competitive advantage in the market? For certain, the way is to undertake effective employer branding steps, invest in creating organizational value and promoting growth of our employees. The leaders here are IT companies that have for a considerable time invested in image boosting campaigns as well as provision of comfortable workplaces and attractive benefit packages for their employees. However, it has to be remembered that happy employees are what promotes an organization most successfully. It is extremely difficult to persuade a job seeker to talk to an organization with a somewhat imperfect image even when sushi is served there at lunchtime and its employees are given the use of a top-of-the-range chill-out room during their breaks.

#### FROM THE STAFF'S PERSPECTIVE – WHAT MATTERS MOST?\*



GROWTH  
OPPORTUNITIES



INTERESTING  
PROJECTS / CHALLENGES



WORK-LIFE  
BALANCE



EMPLOYMENT  
STABILITY



WORKPLACE  
ENVIRONMENT

\*The five most frequently named qualities  
Source: Hays

## LABOUR MARKET IN THE WAREHOUSE SECTOR

The warehouse sector fits in with optimistic economic growth trends: the number of warehouses is increasing, in particular in Central Poland, in the area of Bydgoszcz and Toruń, Poznań and in the Upper Silesia. Companies are opting for space expansion and consolidation, new schemes are being delivered to the market, and in view of growth of the e-commerce sector, the forecast for the industry is continued growth.

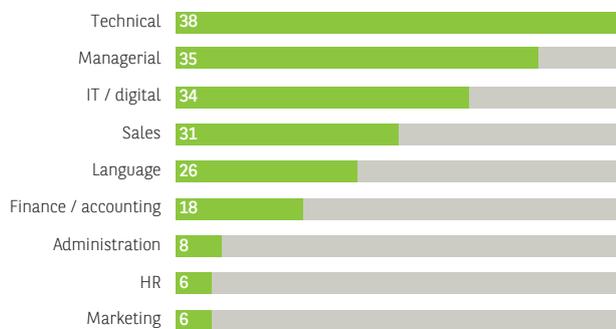
The TSL market is intensely competitive; companies are forced to constantly aim for optimization of their costs and facilitation of processes, while customer expectations are high and continue to rise. When looking for managerial staff, organizations look at the candidates' previous experience in optimization of logistics processes, their lean technology expertise and practical experience in its implementation. As regards warehouse management positions, what also counts is experience in managing a specific group of individuals, working at high/low bay warehouses, knowledge of particular warehouse processes and working with ERP and WMS systems, scanners, IR systems and other modern technology solutions. In addition to English, increasingly often command of a second foreign language at a conversational level is now also required, most commonly German and Russian.

This is particularly important in order processing centres, where specialists with unique linguistic skills are most sought after. As far as logistics services providers are concerned, it is sales skills that are valued the most. Furthermore, there are also interesting job offers for job candidates with experience in intermodal transport and contract logistics.

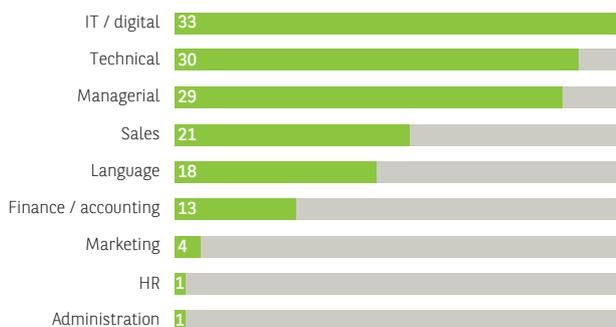
When considering the entirety of specialist and managerial positions, soft skills are also of extreme importance: high level of flexibility, communication skills, resistance to stress and the ability to work under time pressure within a dynamic and ever-changing environment.

However, it has to be stressed at the same time that it is estimated that within the next five years the working-age population in Poland will decrease by nearly 1.4 million. By 2050 the difference could be as much as 8 million. Even now there is a shortage of staff with the required qualifications, licences and experience in operating certain machinery. In the era of economic growth and extensive professional opportunities opening on the market, it is also increasingly difficult to find temporary staff, which is one of the most popular solutions applied in organizations that have to deal with seasonal increases in demand. The solution here could be progressive automation, which certainly represents an opportunity for even more effective use and optimization of logistics services as well as elimination of many of the human-factor errors.

### WHAT ARE THE SKILLS MOST SOUGHT AFTER BY ORGANIZATIONS? (%)\*



### WHAT SKILLS ARE THE MOST DIFFICULT FOR ORGANIZATIONS TO ACQUIRE? (%)\*



\*The percentage values do not add up to 100% as it was possible to tick more than one answer.  
Source: Hays



**ANNA SZEWCZYK**

Senior Consultant Engineering  
Hays Poland Sp. z o.o.

## HAYS Recruiting experts worldwide

Hays Poland is an HR consultancy owned by the international Hays plc group, the leading global specialist recruitment company. Active on the recruitment market for more than 40 years, Hays has 251 offices operating in 33 countries. At the moment Hays Poland employs more than 250 staff in offices in Warsaw, Katowice, Wrocław, Kraków, the Tri-City, Łódź, Poznań and Szczecin. Hays provide customer-tailored specialist recruitment services, dealing in permanent positions, contract roles and temporary assignments.

# EMPLOYMENT FROM THE EAST

## INCREASING NUMBER OF JOB VACANCIES

According to data presented by GUS, the number of job vacancies in Poland at the end of Q1 2017 stood at around 120,000, showing a 33.4% increase y/y. It represents the highest result ever recorded. Furthermore, a record number of 226,000 new jobs were created between January and March, while just under 79,000 jobs were liquidated. Additionally, the majority of firms are declaring further increases in employment.

## DECLINE OF POLISH POPULATION

GUS estimates that by 2050 the Polish population will decrease by more than 3.6 million, with the share of the working-age population (15-64 years) in the total population number dropping from 69% down to 56%. The Polish population growth rate has been negative since 2013. Additionally, the number of people emigrating to the West continues to be greater than that of those returning. This is compensated by the influx of immigrants from the East, mainly the Ukraine, as a result of which in 2016, for the first time in its post-war history, Poland recorded a positive migration balance.

## NEW WAVE OF IMMIGRANTS

In just two years the number of workers from across the eastern border tripled and it is currently estimated at 1.2 - 1.3 million. The direct reason is the military conflict in Eastern and Southern Ukraine and the resultant economic crisis that led to, amongst others, devaluation of the Ukrainian hryvnia.

*The Ukrainian citizens working in Poland* survey by the National Bank of Poland (NBP) highlights the different nature of today's migration as compared to migration patterns from before 2014. Nowadays Poland is the destination of choice for considerably younger people, where the average age is 33 (43 before 2014). Furthermore, the share of male migrants has increased significantly - 58% (33% before 2014). There has also been a distinct rise in the percentage share of single people and those with no children in the total number of all migrants, which could mean that some of those currently working in Poland will not be motivated to return to the Ukraine.

## UKRAINIANS ON THE LABOUR MARKET

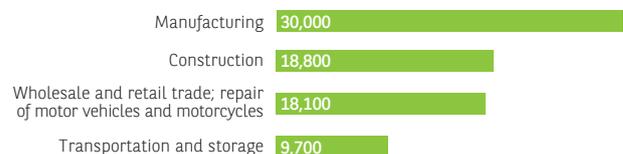
Considering the current shortage of workforce on the Polish market, the presence of employees from the East represents the only chance for many companies to expand their operations and grow. The Ukrainians not only meet the great demand for workforce, but also suppress wage increases so feared by employers. However, increasingly often immigrants find employment not because they

have lower financial expectations, but purely because they want to work in the first place. Employers admit that due to the rapid market growth, finding a sufficient number of people willing to work at all represents a challenge, and is sometimes impossible. Therefore, entire production lines that rely on Ukrainian speaking staff are being set up, where their wages do not differ from those of the other employees.

## NOT ONLY LABOURERS

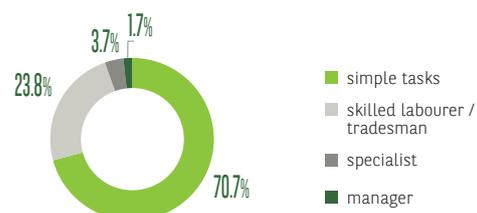
No all migrants arrive in Poland purely for commercial purposes. Over the past three years the number of students coming from the Ukraine to study at Polish universities has increased significantly. According to research by NBP, approximately half of them, in addition to studying, is also active on the labour market, while a large part intends to find employment. Out of those, as many as 69% of respondents declares that in the future they would like to work in Poland or have at least partial professional ties to Poland. As Poland is facing a demographic crisis, these are extremely optimistic data. The question is: will Poland's allure be strong enough to retain foreign employees? This represents a key issue, when you consider the abolition of visas for the Ukrainian citizens to enter the Schengen zone that entered into effect on 11th June this year. So far the legal regulations meant that finding employment in Poland was easier than in other EU states. The abolition of visas means greater competition in respect of attracting employees. Is the fact that Poland and the Ukraine are direct neighbours with similar languages enough for the Ukrainian workers to remain in Poland? Only time will tell.

### JOB VACANCIES FOR SELECTED SECTIONS OF THE POLISH CLASSIFICATION OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES AS AT THE END OF Q1 2017



Source: GUS, *Demand for work in Q1 2017*

### TYPE OF WORK PERFORMED



Source: National Bank of Poland, *Ukrainian citizens working in Poland*, research carried out in 2015

# EXPERT'S VIEW ON E-COMMERCE

## *E-commerce needs people*

Our experience from recruitment projects run over the past 12 months makes us confident that the generally prevailing opinion that we are now dealing with an employee market is not ungrounded. In addition to increasing expectations in respect of their salary, employees are nowadays attaching ever greater importance to the so-called non-payroll and frequently non-monetary employment terms such as working conditions and atmosphere.

The difficulties in attracting sufficient workforce urge organizations to intensify their steps aimed at improving their staff's performance levels. They could be of short-term nature, such as improving the functionality of the basic tools and equipment, linking the bonus amount to the results achieved and improving work organization; as well as long-term, such as implementing e-commerce dedicated automation, adjusting a distribution centre's layout to real flows for regular and peak times and introducing a newer generation WMS system.

One of the performance indicators for logistics and warehouse processes is the warehouse floor area to employee ratio. I have found in my experience that for e-commerce it should not be higher than 100, i.e. there should be no less than 100 sqm per employee. For everyday operations the optimum ratio

is approximately 70, i.e. 150 employees per each 10,000 sqm, while in the high season, in the period preceding Christmas, it should drop even as far as below 50.

The e-commerce industry is currently one of the most dynamically growing economy sectors. Thus, it represents a good area for expansion of warehouse space created specifically to support the industry's distinctive needs: flexibility, speed of operations, excellent work organization, attractive location.



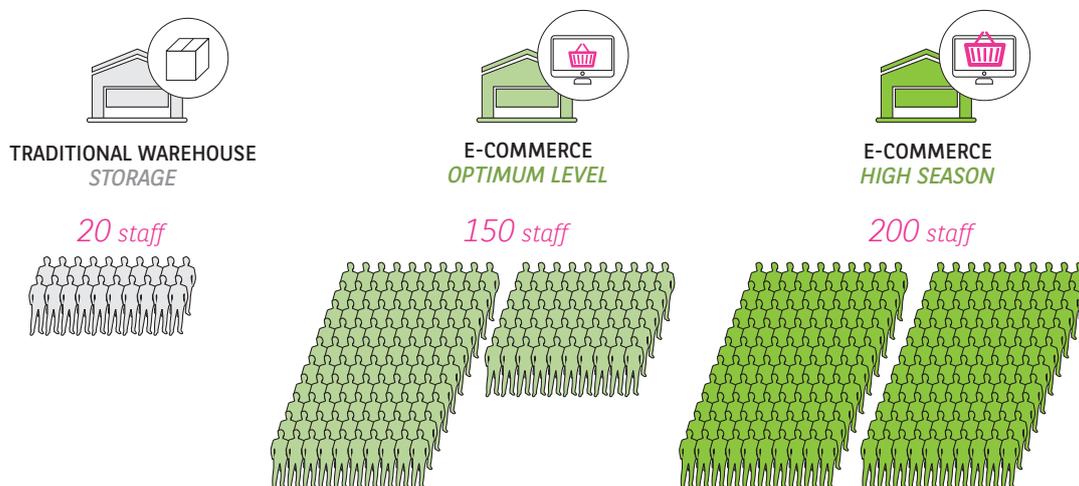
**TOMASZ HABIGIER**

*Operations Director, eMAG*



eMAG is one of the region's largest e-stores. We have operations in Poland, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria. Despite its 15 years of presence on the market, eMAG is an organization with a prevailing start-up culture.

### OPTIMUM NUMBER OF STAFF WORKING ON 10,000 SQM OF WAREHOUSE SPACE



Source: BNP Paribas Real Estate

# 3PL'S PERSPECTIVE

## *How is low unemployment impacting a tenant's situation*

The logistics industry in Poland is still the leader in terms of demand for warehouse space. A survey carried out by BNP Paribas Real Estate posed questions to companies active in the sector about some of the aspects of the current situation on the Polish warehouse market.

### WHAT ATTRACTS PEOPLE TO A WAREHOUSE?

The answers provided to the question on the importance of specific aspects in the process of selecting a warehouse split the critical factors into 3 groups. The decidedly most important parameters for the logistics industry are: **access to workers performing simple tasks** and **transport infrastructure**, which were named as important and extremely important by 95% and 100% respondents respectively.

The second group of factors includes: **warehouse technical parameters** and **access to skilled workforce**. These categories are indisputably more often named as important as opposed to extremely important; however nearly 100% of respondents takes them into account when selecting a warehouse.

The last group that stands out comprises aspects frequently named as important, however they do not represent the key factor for the logistics industry. They are as follows: **office and staff facilities standard** and **proximity to large urban centres**.

Other factors named as impacting on a scheme's attractiveness included location within an industrial area, options for space expansion, large manoeuvring yards and access to fibre-optic Internet.

### WHAT NEXT?

The findings of the survey are surprising as much as the aspects relating to the situation on the labour market. While they have always been important, now they are starting to lead the field. When selecting their warehouse location, 95% of respondents are influenced by the availability of workers that perform the so-called simple tasks, which is the second most important criterion following a well-developed transport infrastructure in the first position. The majority of companies are already trying to win employees by offering specific non-payroll benefits, while every third company provides immigrants from across the Eastern border with early career support.

Simultaneously, the favourable economic climate encourages companies to expand, and consequently increase the number of staff employed. It is therefore almost certain that new warehouse facilities will be emerging in locations with greater avail-

ability of workforce, while increased wages named as one of the key threats for the industry will become a reality.

### THREATS

Representatives of the industry were asked in the survey about the potential threats to the warehouse and logistics sector in Poland. The respondents' answers showed three definite areas that represent potential barriers to growth. The most frequently identified factor named by 74% respondents was shortage of workforce on the market. The second aspect closely linked to the first one comes in the form of increased labour costs (68%), while the next threat identified was high level of competition feared by 42% of companies. The other potential threats named included: risk of drop in demand, difficulties in finding warehouse space and unfavourable legal regulations such as a ban on Sunday trading.

### HOW DO WE ATTRACT EMPLOYEES?

63% of respondents declare that they are undertaking steps aimed at increasing their attractiveness as an employer. The most popular measures include: arranging transport for staff (58%) and providing access to a cafeteria / canteen (50%). An interesting trend here is the fact that every third logistics company wooing new employees tailors their recruitment and job positions to the Ukrainian and Russian candidates, while every fourth one sets up kindergartens / nurseries on site.

Other forms of attracting employees also have to be mentioned here, such as non-payroll benefits comprising medical care and employee referral programmes so popular abroad.

### PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

The unquestionable majority of respondents display a positive attitude in respect of the future of their operations. 84% of respondents intend to increase employment numbers, while 64% think to expand on space currently leased. This will result in continuation of the favourable economic climate, as well as progressively more intensive pursuit of employees by organizations and search for locations offering greater availability of workforce.

# SURVEY RESULTS

## WHAT ATTRACTS PEOPLE TO A WAREHOUSE?

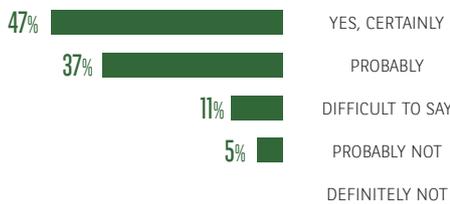
WEIGHT OF CRITERIA WHEN SELECTING A WAREHOUSE (EXCLUSIVE OF LEASE COST)



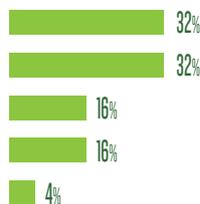
## WHAT NEXT

PLANS FOR GROWTH OF THE LOGISTICS INDUSTRY FOR THE COMING YEAR

### Increased employment

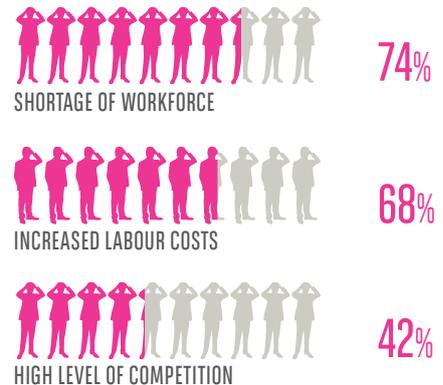


### Increased floor area of the facilities leased



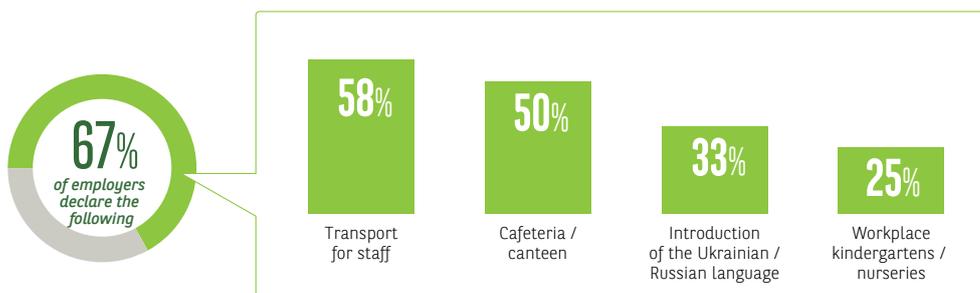
## THREATS

POTENTIAL BARRIERS TO GROWTH OF THE LOGISTICS INDUSTRY



## HOW DO WE ATTRACT EMPLOYEES?

STEPS UNDERTAKEN BY LOGISTICS COMPANIES AIMED AT INCREASING THEIR ATTRACTIVENESS AS AN EMPLOYER\*



\*The percentage values do not add up to 100% as it was possible to tick more than one answer.  
Source: BNP Paribas Real Estate, findings from a survey carried out amongst representatives of the logistics industry, May 2017



## CONTACTS

### **Patrick Delcol**

Chief Executive Officer  
Central and Eastern Europe  
patrick.delcol@bnpparibas.com

### **Erik Drukker**

Managing Director  
Agency & Valuation  
Central and Eastern Europe  
erik.drukker@bnpparibas.com

### **Katarzyna Pys-Fabianczyk**

Head of Industrial  
& Logistics Department  
Central and Eastern Europe  
katarzyna.pys-fabianczyk@bnpparibas.com

### **John Palmer FRICS SIOR**

Director, Industrial Investments  
& Valuations, Central and Eastern Europe  
john.palmer@bnpparibas.com

### **Anna Baran, MRICS**

acting Director, Head of Valuation  
Central and Eastern Europe  
anna.b.baran@bnpparibas.com

### **Michał Pszkit**

Head of Property Management  
Central and Eastern Europe  
michal.pszkit@bnpparibas.com

### **Anna Staniszevska**

Head of Research & Consultancy  
Central and Eastern Europe  
anna.staniszevska@bnpparibas.com



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Cover, P7, 14, 15 - Fotolia; P3 - photographer Krzysztof Dubiel;  
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## A 360° vision

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Headquarters  
167, Quai de la Bataille  
de Stalingrad  
92867 Issy-les-Moulineaux  
Tel.: +33 1 55 65 20 04

##### BELGIUM

Avenue Louise 235  
1050 Brussels  
Tel.: +32 2 290 59 59

##### CZECH REPUBLIC

Pobřežní 620/3  
186 00 Prague 8  
Tel.: +420 224 835 000

##### GERMANY

Goetheplatz 4  
60311 Frankfurt  
Tel.: +49 69 2 98 99 0

##### HUNGARY

117-119 Váci ut.  
A Building  
1123 Budapest,  
Tel.: +36 1 487 5501

##### IRELAND

20 Merrion Road,  
Ballsbridge, Dublin 4  
Tel.: +353 1 66 11 233

##### ITALY

Piazza Lina Bo Bardi, 3  
20124 Milano  
Tel.: +39 02 58 33 141

##### JERSEY

3 Floor, Dialogue House  
2 - 6 Anley Street  
St Helier, Jersey JE4 8RD  
Tel.: +44 (0)1 534 629 001

##### LUXEMBOURG

Axento Building  
Avenue J.F. Kennedy 44  
1855 Luxembourg  
Tel.: +352 34 94 84  
Investment Management  
Tel.: +352 26 26 06 06

##### NETHERLANDS

Antonio Vivaldistraat 54  
1083 HP Amsterdam  
Tel.: +31 20 305 97 20

##### POLAND

Al. Jana Pawła II 25  
Atrium Tower  
00-854 Warsaw  
Tel.: +48 22 653 44 00

##### ROMANIA

Banul Antonache  
Street n°40-44  
Bucharest 011665  
Tel.: +40 21 312 7000

##### SPAIN

C/ Génova 17  
28004 Madrid  
Tel.: +34 91 454 96 00

##### UNITED KINGDOM

5 Aldermanbury Square  
London EC2V 7BP  
Tel.: +44 20 7338 4000

#### MIDDLE EAST / ASIA

##### DUBAI

Emaar Square  
Building n° 1, 7th Floor  
P.O. Box 7233, Dubai  
Tel.: +971 44 248 277

##### HONG KONG

25 /F Three Exchange  
Square,  
8 Connaught Place, Central,  
Hong Kong  
Tel.: +852 2909 2806

### Alliances\*

#### ALGERIA

#### AUSTRIA

#### CYPRUS

#### DENMARK

#### ESTONIA

#### FINLAND

#### GREECE

#### HUNGARY \*\*

#### IVORY COAST

#### LATVIA

#### LITHUANIA

#### MOROCCO

#### NORTHERN IRELAND

#### NORWAY

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