

# First International Conference on Funeral Services in Visegrad Region

4–6 November 2014



EXPO CENTER  
TRENČÍN



Marek Cichewicz



## Polish funeral trade AD 2014 – social, institutional and legal aspects



Międzynarodowe  
Targi  
Poznańskie

**Marek Cichewicz** → *Vice President of the Polish Funeral Association (second term of office), the organizer of the MEMENTO Funeral Fair in Warsaw and Poznan (2008, 2010, 2012). Member of the Polish Funeral Association's special task force in charge of enacting a new funeral law in Poland.*

→ Vice President of FIAT-IFTA for 2014-2016, responsible for international corpse transport, elected in Düsseldorf on May 30th, 2014.

→ Co-owner of BONGO, a company rendering international funeral shipping services throughout Poland; in May this year BONGO, which has 100 representatives in 80 countries around the globe, opened its first stationary office in Bochum.

→ Co-shareholder in “Centrum Pogrzebowe” Sp. z o.o. (LLC), which company is carrying out the construction of a funeral complex (cemetery, ceremonial facility and crematory) in an inventive form of public-private partnership in Cracow.



*Marek Cichewicz and  
Claus Dieter Wulf,  
President of FIAT-IFTA  
(2012-2014)*





# Polskie Stowarzyszenie Pogrzebowe (PSP) (Polish Funeral Association)

- ➔ PSP, based in Warsaw, commenced its operation throughout Poland in 1998.
- ➔ PSP has been a national member of FIAT-IFTA since June 2006 (one of 34), since June 2014 having the status as an International Non-Governmental Organization and a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage consultant.
- ➔ PSP has affiliated more than 100 administrators of the largest cemeteries and crematories as well as owners and CEOs of large funeral undertakings in Poland.
- ➔ PSP has three task chapters, operative on a permanent basis, i.e. Municipal Cemetery Administrators and Managers Chapter, Crematory Chapter, and Funeral Undertakings Chapter.
- ➔ In March 2014 the new PSP Management was elected, with Krzysztof Wolicki as President and Marek Cichewicz (Vice President), Franciszek Maksymiuk (Vice President), Arkadiusz Durek (Member of the Board), Marian Sarniak (Member of the Board), Adam Ragiel (Secretary) and Jan Szczuciński (Treasurer) as Directors.





# PSP MANAGEMENT



**Krzysztof Wolicki**  
President  
Owner of PHU KRZYSZTOF

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**Franciszek Maksymiuk**  
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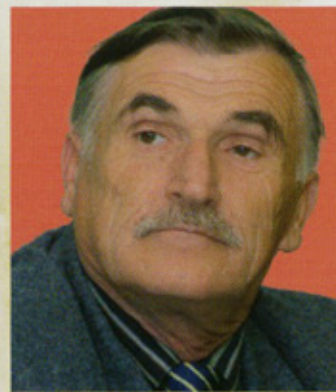
**Marek Cichewicz**  
Vice President  
Co-owner of BONGO  
Vice President of FIAT-IFTA



**Jan Szczuciński**  
treasurer  
CEO of SŁUŻEW  
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**Adam Ragiel**  
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Member of the Board  
Co-owner of UNIWERSAL  
Bydgoszcz



# Polskie Stowarzyszenie Pogrzebowe (PSP) (Polish Funeral Association) cont.

## *Objects of the Association as per its Articles*

- ➔ Cooperating with central government bodies, local authorities, undertakers, clergymen, insurance agents and cemetery equipment and funeral supplies manufacturers.
- ➔ Giving opinions on bills and orders to relevant ministries.
- ➔ Preparing expert evaluations concerning the situation on the funeral, crematory and cemetery services market for local authorities.
- ➔ Promulgating ethical standards applicable to the cemetery and funeral trade, contained in the Association's Code of Ethics.
- ➔ Acting with the aim of eradicating the funerary market's pathology, manifesting itself in the starkest form of funeral parlors canvassing for business in public health care institutions' mortuaries.



# Polskie Stowarzyszenie Pogrzebowe (PSP) (Polish Funeral Association) cont.

## *Objects of the Association as per its Articles*

- ➔ Guarding professionalism, professional development and the improvement of expertise and skills in cemetery estate management.
- ➔ Inservice training for cemetery administrators and undertakers, aimed at the cyclic improvement of qualifications.
- ➔ Organizing trade conferences on, inter alia, cremation as a funeral ceremony, grave construction work, issues concerning modern embalming (thanatopraxy), privatization of municipal companies, cemetery and funeral services law, and new cemetery architectural forms.



*The conference on the new law  
in Złoty Potok – March, 2009*



# Polskie Stowarzyszenie Pogrzebowe (PSP) (Polish Funeral Association) cont.

## *Objects of the Association as per its Articles*

- ➔ Popularizing the cremation ceremony and the construction of urn graves and columbaria for burial of funeral urns with ashes.
- ➔ Awarding a KARTA PROFESJONALISTY (Professional ID Card) in the field of cemetery estate management and keeping the Central Register of Cemetery Estate Managers.
- ➔ Cooperating with the Pastoral Care of Funeral Workers, set up on the initiative of the Association in 2000.
- ➔ Publishing the journal – the Funeral Bimonthly *Memento*, devoted to funeral culture and organization, activities of cemeteries and funeral parlors, funeral law, as well as funeral and cemetery service technology.

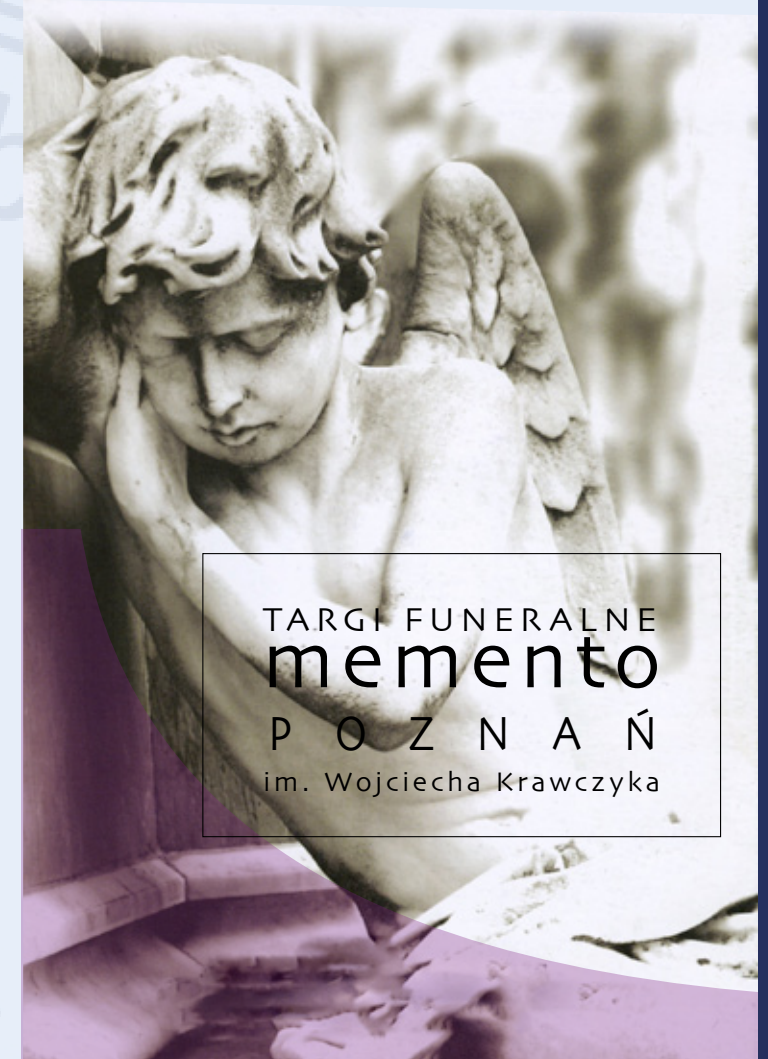




# Polskie Stowarzyszenie Pogrzebowe (PSP) (Polish Funeral Association) cont.

## *Objects of the Association as per its Articles*

- ➔ Organizing – in partnership with the Poznan International Fair – the Wojciech Krawczyk MEMENTO POZNAN Funeral Fair, the exposition of funeral and funerary engineering equipment for Poland and East-Central Europe.





# The historical development of the Polish cemetery and funeral trade



*A nineteenth-century hearse*

➔ The development of the Polish trade in question can be illustrated with the progress in funeral means of transport – from a horse-drawn hearse to a good old Nysa to a Polonez to a Jaguar.



*A Nysa*



*A Polonez*



*A Jaguar*



# The historical development of the Polish cemetery and funeral trade cont.

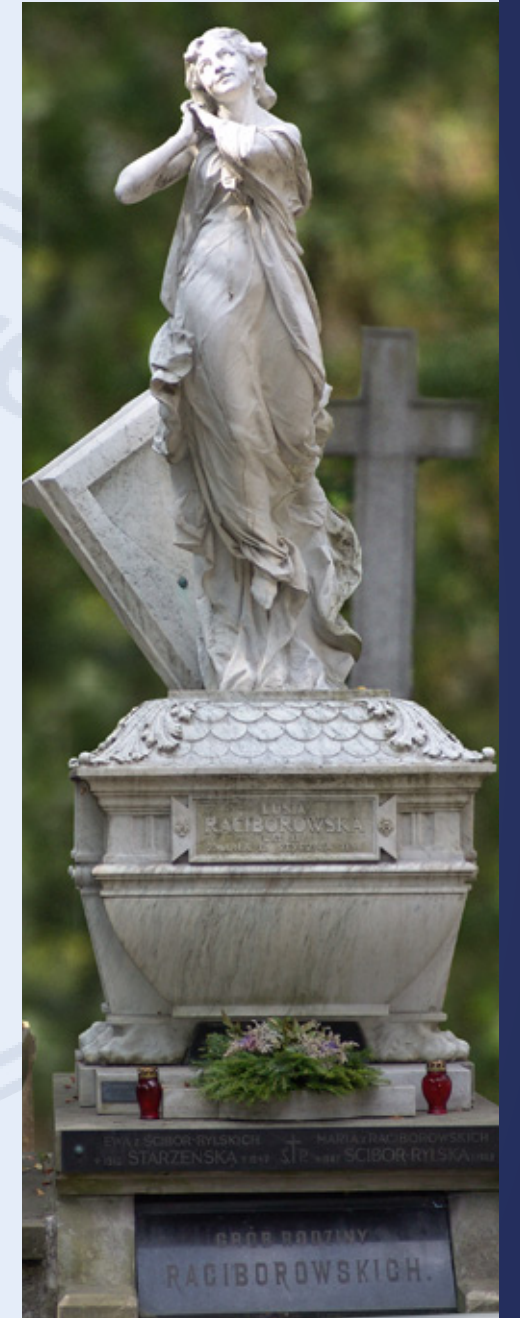
- ➔ From the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century on, there were undertakings and firms specializing in organizing funeral ceremonies, being established in the Polish territories under the Partitioners' rule. However, their services were used by the well-to-do, while the poor were buried by charity organizations and religious communities.
- ➔ There were also international corpse transport services on offer, especially from the Italian and French Rivas. As assured, those services were rendered “30 percent cheaper than those offered by local undertakings”.
- ➔ 30 funeral parlors operating in the prewar Warsaw were based on the city's most elegant streets.
- ➔ Corpses were formerly transported from churches on a stretcher, and then on a funeral wagon (special platform). Horse-drawn hearses, called “death wagons,” appeared in Warsaw in 1783, when the Świętokrzyski Cemetery, Warsaw's first out-of-town necropolis, was opened.



*This hearse would still take its routes down the streets of Gorlice in the 1980s*

# The historical development of the Polish cemetery and funeral trade cont.

- ➔ In the 1930s first funerary motor vehicles come into use, to monopolize the funerary transport and put an end to funeral processions after the end of World War Two.
- ➔ Polish cemetery services have undergone evolution. Until the late 18<sup>th</sup> century dead bodies were buried in churches and church graveyards. From then on, necropolises started being situated out of town, e.g. at Warsaw's Powązki.
- ➔ Before World War Two Catholic cemeteries were administered by the Supervisory Board of Roman Catholic Cemeteries and religious communities.
- ➔ Graves were dug in the ground until the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Following the relocation of necropolises beyond town limits, gravestones, magnificent sculptures, sarcophaguses and granite, marble or bronze chapels began to be erected. In the postwar years there were simple forms prevailing, which in the course of time have further been supplanted by mass terrazzo (chips of marble or granite set in concrete) and less numerous granite tombstones.



*The tombstone of Lusja Raciborowska  
at the Powązki Cemetery (1899)*



# The historical development of the Polish cemetery and funeral trade cont.



*The sarcophagus  
of Aleksander Sieniawski*

→ There were wooden and metal casket manufactories operating in the old Poland (with wooden caskets being over thrice cheaper than metal ones). In the 18<sup>th</sup> century the poor deceased were buried directly in the ground, in a shroud. Coffins for the well-to-do were made of wood, ornamented with a cross only, or possibly, covered with fabric. The 18<sup>th</sup> century also witnessed the onset of metal caskets, frequently embellished with gold ornaments.

→ The first cremation in Poland took place in Gdansk in 1914. The idea of cremation has been promoted in Poland since 1905 onwards.

→ To this day the Second World War and the concentration camps' crematoria have had tragic associations, raising skepticism about that form of interment in elderly people in particular.

The first stationary crematory in Poland was built in Poznan in 1993, with cremations taking place there from as early as 1985 onwards.



*A nineteenth-century  
oaken casket*

# The historical development of the Polish cemetery and funeral trade cont.

- ➔ Post-1945 Communist rule in Poland backed the state monopoly on funeral services as well. The funerary market was dominated by municipal public service corporations. The rapid development of funerary private enterprise, otherwise characterized by considerable fragmentation and strong competing tendencies to this day, started in 1989.
- ➔ The first trade organization in Poland post-1945 is the Capital City Undertakers' Association, established in Warsaw in 1993.
- ➔ The growth of the Polish cemetery and funeral trade also owes to a tendency to offload death on a hospital, with formalities completed for us, increasingly widespread across the Polish people, half of whom – i.e. circa 180,000 per annum – die in hospital. A funeral is arranged for 'from the catalogue', with a funeral parlor commissioned to provide most services.
- ➔ It is estimated that there are about 2,800 funeral parlors operating in Poland today. In the Warsaw conurbation, populated by nearly 3.5 million, there are approximately 200 funeral homes, compared to only a dozen or so operative in Warsaw in the early 1990s.



# 1. Poland and the Polish funerary market AD 2014 – the social aspect

## *Geographic and demographic data*

- ➔ Area of Polish territory: 322,575 km<sup>2</sup> (the 70<sup>th</sup> largest country in the world in terms of area).
- ➔ Population: 38.496 million people (data for December 2013 – a decrease in the population by 37,000 compared to 2012 (the 35<sup>th</sup> largest country in the world and 6<sup>th</sup> largest in the EU in terms of population).
- ➔ Deaths in 2013 – 387,000 people (an increase in deaths by 2,000 compared to 2012) – more than 70% of them caused by cardiovascular diseases and malignant tumors.
- ➔ The death rate in 2013 is 10.1‰ compared to 10.0‰ in 2012.
- ➔ Poland is an **ethnically homogenous** country.
- ➔ Poland is a **religiously homogenous** country as well.



# 1. Poland and the Polish funerary market AD 2014 – the social aspect cont.

## *Geographic and demographic data*

- ➔ According to the census of 2011, **the national and ethnic structure** of Poland's population is as follows:
  - ➔ Poles – 97.09 %
  - ➔ Silesians – 2.2 %
  - ➔ Kashubians – 0.61 %
  - ➔ Germans – 0.38 %
  - ➔ Ukrainians – 0.13 %
  - ➔ Belorussians – 0.12 %
  - ➔ Romanies – 0.04 %
  - ➔ Russians – 0.03 %
  - ➔ Americans – 0.003 %
  - ➔ Lemkos – 0.003 %
  - ➔ English – 0.003 %
  - ➔ Other unspecified – 1.35 %
- ➔ According to the Central Statistical Office's data for the end of 2011, the percentage share of **religions in Poland** is as follows:
  - ➔ Catholicism – 86.9 % (mainly Roman Catholicism – 86.7 %, Greek Catholicism – 0.14 %, Old Catholicism – 0.12 %),
  - ➔ Orthodox faith – 1.31 % (mainly Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church – 1.31 %),
  - ➔ Protestantism – 0.38 % (mainly Evangelicalism – 0.18 %, Pentecostalism – 0.09 %, other Evangelical Christians – 0.07%, Adventists and other groups – 0.04 %),
  - ➔ Jehovah's Witnesses – 0.34 %,
  - ➔ Buddhism – circa 0.04 %,
  - ➔ Islam – 0.013 %,
  - ➔ Neopaganism – circa 0.01 %,
  - ➔ Judaism – 0.004 %

# 1. Poland and the Polish funerary market AD 2014 – the social aspect cont.

## *A Polish funeral ...*

- ➔ Follows the Catholic rite.
- ➔ No less than 93% of Poles declare their affiliation to the Roman Catholic Church.
- ➔ In 90% of cases, a funeral service includes a Holy Mass (in 10% of cases, a funeral service takes the form of obsequies).
- ➔ In Polish cities and big towns, arrangements for a funeral ceremony are made on behalf of a family by a funeral parlor.
- ➔ A funeral with a Mass is not celebrated on Sundays, church holidays and during the Easter Triduum, when it is only permissible to celebrate obsequies with the Liturgy of the Word, i.e. the reading, the sermonizing and the last farewell rite.





# 1. Poland and the Polish funerary market AD 2014 – the social aspect cont.

## *A Polish funeral*

- ➔ The Polish Church practices three forms of funeral rites for adults:
  1. the form consisting of three stations: at the deceased's home, in church and at a cemetery,
  2. the form consisting of two stations: at a cemetery chapel and at the graveside (without a Holy Mass, otherwise usually celebrated in the absence of the deceased's body before or just after a funeral),
  3. the form consisting of one station: at the deceased's home.
- ➔ The Polish Roman Catholic Church permits cremation as long as it does not undermine the dogma of faith in the Resurrection, however recommending celebrating two rites: the classical funeral with a Requiem Mass before cremation, and after that – the mere ceremony of burying an urn in the grave, without a Holy Mass.





# 1. Poland and the Polish funerary market AD 2014 – the social aspect cont.

## *A Polish funeral*

- ➔ Nevertheless, in exceptional circumstances it is admissible to perform funeral rites over an urn only.
- ➔ Under the Polish Cemeteries and Burials Act of 31 January 1959, corpses and ashes after cremation may be buried in:

† columbaria

† catacombs

† stone box graves

† earth graves





# 1. Poland and the Polish funerary market AD 2014 – the social aspect cont.

## *A Polish funeral*

→ In accordance with the applicable regulations in force, urns may only be stored at a cemetery and ashes may not be scattered in any place whatsoever, not even in the so-called fields of remembrance at necropolises.



→ The cemetery and funeral trade was materially impacted and the interest in cremation was enhanced by a reduction in funeral payments made by the Social Security Administration (ZUS), from EUR 1,500 to just under 1,000 in March 2011. Currently, funeral payments cover an average of 40-50% of expenditure on a traditional burial, but 100% of cremation costs.





# 1. Poland and the Polish funerary market AD 2014 – the social aspect cont.

## *A Polish funeral ...*

- ➔ involves **the veneration of the ancestors**, including, inter alia, the following:
  - » 90% of Poles visit their ancestors' graves on All Saints' and All Souls' Days (November 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>).



- » On the aforesaid days, there is fund raising at cemeteries, with popular cultural personalities (actors, singers, artists) collecting donations for the restoration of historic and period tombstones.



Such fund-raising campaigns were initiated by Jerzy Waldorff, an outstanding writer and literary critic, 35 years ago.

*The tombstone of Jerzy Waldorff  
at Warsaw's Powązki*





## 2. Poland and the Polish funerary market AD 2014 – the organizational aspect

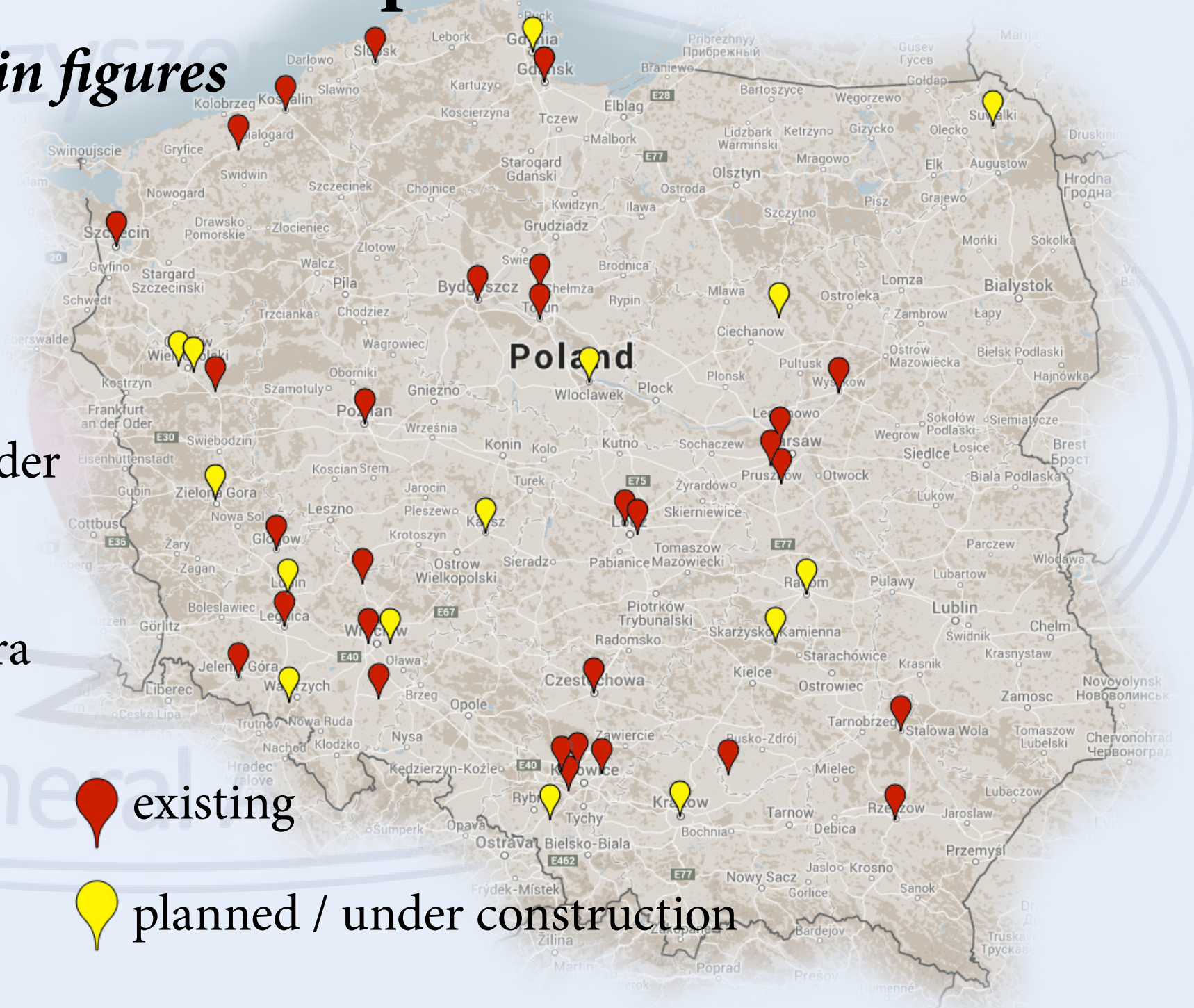
- ➔ Fragmentation of the market, with small family businesses employing several persons in the majority, and diversification of companies in terms of legal frame.
- ➔ ZUS funeral payments – de facto a kind of state subsidy to the service sector in question – are a stable source of revenue, which results in the trade's financial situation heavily depending on the amount thereof. Currently, the aforesaid amount is circa EUR 1,000 (before 2011 – EUR 1,500), while the cost of a traditional burial in a big town fluctuates around EUR 1,700 – 2,300.
- ➔ Free access to funeral service professions, with no formal requirements for setting up a funeral parlor administering a cemetery, a body embalming parlor or a crematory.
- ➔ Foreign capital's hitherto unsuccessful attempts to enter the Polish market.
- ➔ Polish companies' tendencies to consolidate by endeavoring to form networks of funeral trade businesses – networks of full funeral services rendered by funeral parlors, monumental masons, grave carers – operating via the Internet and Call Centers, appearing in the last two years.



## 2. Poland and the Polish funerary market AD 2014 – the organizational aspect cont.

### *The cemetery and funerary market in figures*

- ➔ There are 30 crematories operating in Poland in 2014, including:
  - 8 municipal ones
  - 22 privately-owned ones.
- ➔ There are 15 facilities planned for and under construction:
  - Skarżysko-Kamienna
  - Wrocław (2<sup>nd</sup> facility)
  - Zielona Góra
  - Gdynia
  - Żory
  - Suwałki
  - Lubin
  - Boguszków Gorce
  - Gorzów Wielkopolski (two facilities)
  - Cracow
  - Kalisz
  - Przasnysz
  - Włocławek
  - Radom



 existing

 planned / under construction



## 2. Poland and the Polish funerary market AD 2014 – the organizational aspect cont.

### *The cemetery and funerary market in figures*

- ➔ A spectacularly increased number of crematories in the last 3 years – from 13 in 2010 to 30 in 2014 (plus 17). There were 13 crematories before 2011: in Bytom, Częstochowa, Gdansk, Głogów, Lodz (two), Poznan, Ruda Śląska (two), Szczecin, Warsaw (only at Wólka), Wrocław and Wyszaków.
- ➔ Cremation rate around 15% (as per approximate data).
- ➔ Cremation data are approximate, because privately-owned crematories refuse to make them available, using trade secret as an excuse, which would be simply unthinkable in many other countries, where crematories are under strict supervision, police surveillance included.
- ➔ Number of municipal cemeteries – circa 3,000.
- ➔ Number of religious cemeteries – circa 9,000.
- ➔ Number of funeral parlors – circa 2,800.
- ➔ Number of cemetery and funeral supplies manufacturers – circa 1,000.
- ➔ No privately-owned cemeteries in Poland.



## 2. Poland and the Polish funerary market AD 2014 – the organizational aspect cont.

### *The cemetery and funerary market*

- ➔ The best-known Polish necropolises are Warsaw's Powązki and the Rakowicki Cemetery in Cracow, where cultural personalities and artists are buried. The largest necropolis in Poland and third largest in Europe is the Central Cemetery in Szczecin. The largest Jewish Cemetery in Europe is in Lodz.
- ➔ Due to the movement of the country's borders several hundred kilometers west, the cemeteries of the greatest importance to Poles have been situated outside Poland; these include the Cemetery of the Defenders of Lviv and the Lychakiv Cemetery in Lviv, the Rasos Cemetery in Vilnius and the Katyn War Cemetery, with the 24,000 Polish officers murdered by the Soviet NKVD (The People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs) and buried there. Poles also make pilgrimages to the Polish Cemetery at Monte Cassino, Italy.
- ➔ There are lapidaria being built at many Polish necropolises, to which old period tombstones are transferred. One of the most beautiful collections of historic tombstones can be seen at the Central Cemetery in Szczecin (the third largest necropolis in Europe).



## 2. Poland and the Polish funerary market AD 2014 – the organizational aspect cont.

➔ There are **two trade organizations** endeavoring to control the numerically dispersed market of funeral parlors, casket and funeral supplies manufacturers and cemetery and crematory administrators, namely:



Polish Funeral Association (PSP), the oldest trade organization embracing the sector's large companies (see activities presented above);



Polish Funeral Chamber, set up in 2002, embracing small and average-sized companies operative in the broadly defined funeral sector; the Polish Funeral Chamber's activities include:

- legal and accounting consultancy,
- furthering the trade interests in relations with central government bodies and local authorities and, where justified, before courts of general jurisdiction;
- co-participating in the legislative process by appearing and giving opinions on amendments to the laws applicable to the funeral trade,
- inservice training for member companies and their personnel.





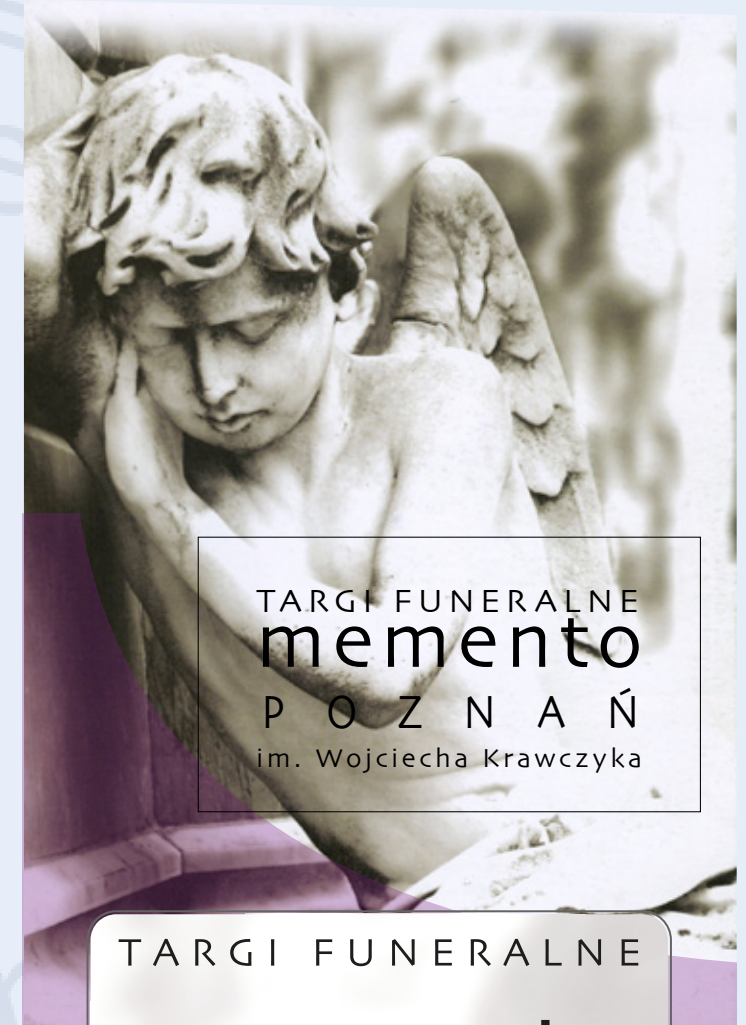
## 2. Poland and the Polish funerary market AD 2014 – the organizational aspect cont.

There are two fair events in Poland, taking place cyclically once every two years.



→ **Wojciech Krawczyk MEMENTO POZNAN Fair** – the first, the oldest and the only Polish fair endorsed by The World Organization of Funeral Operatives (FIAT-IFTA). Since 2001 the Fair has been organized by PSP in Warsaw, in addition to which, since 2012 it has been held on the premises of the Poznan International Fair in Poznan.

→ **NECROEXPO in Kielce** – the event organized in partnership with the Polish Funeral Chamber. During the most recent edition of the Fair, held in 2013, offers were presented by domestic and foreign exhibitors alike.



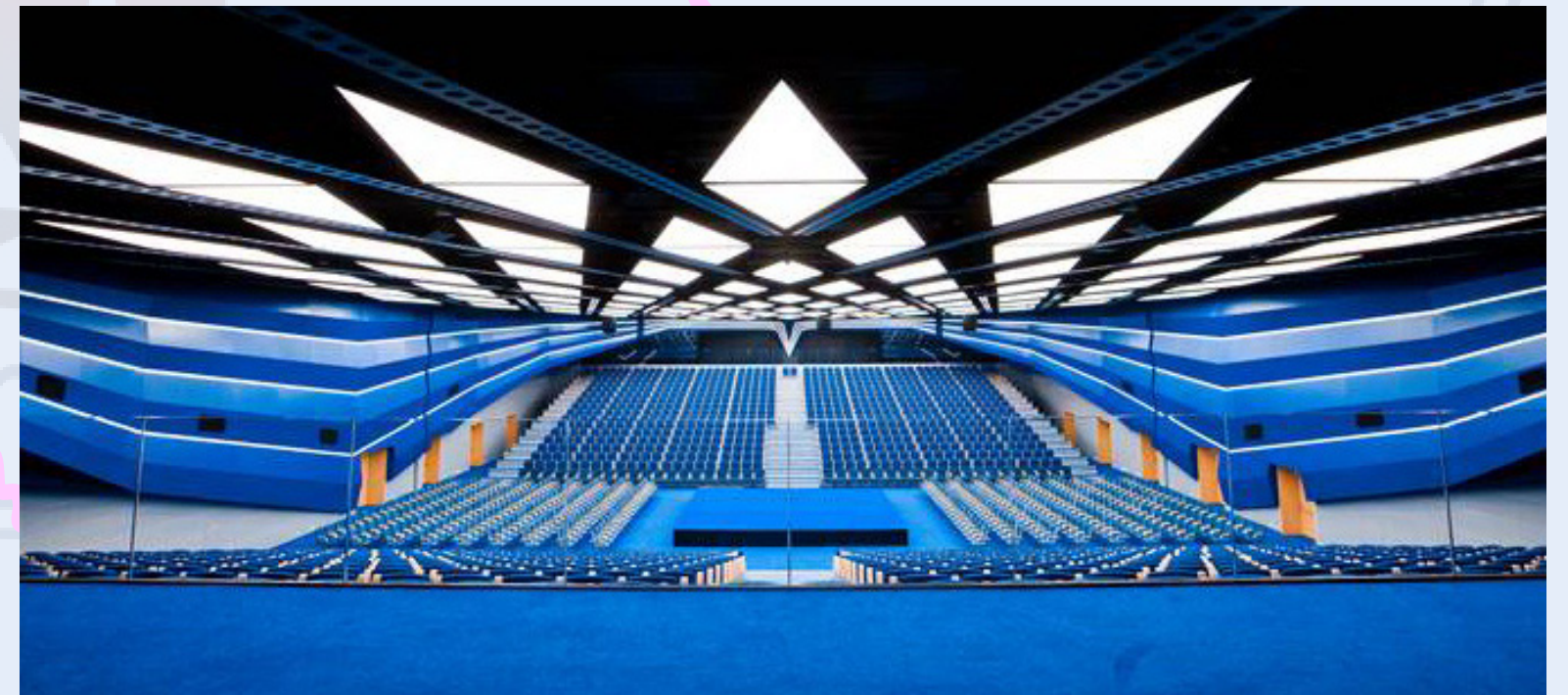


## 2. Poland and the Polish funerary market AD 2014 – the organizational aspect cont.

### *Wojciech Krawczyk MEMENTO POZNAN Fair*

The Wojciech Krawczyk MEMENTO POZNAN Fair's success in the trade is a result of ...

- ➔ the status of the Poznan Fair – the absolute leader of the Polish fair industry and the second biggest fair organizer in East-Central Europe,
- ➔ its state-of-the-art fair infrastructure in Poland, backed up with 90 years' experience in logistic know-how, marketing and exhibitor and visitor service,
- ➔ PSP's knowledge of the trade and 10 years' experience in the organization of funeral fairs, as well as its connections and prestige, resulting from its membership of the international structures of FIAT-IFTA.





## 2. Poland and the Polish funerary market AD 2014 – the organizational aspect cont.

### *Wojciech Krawczyk MEMENTO POZNAN Fair*

- ➔ The first edition of the Wojciech Krawczyk MEMENTO POZNAN Fair in Poznan in November 2012 gathered 65 exhibitors, whose offers were presented to 1,789 visitors from Poland, Italy, Sweden, France, Belgium, Ukraine, Cyprus, Greece, Iceland, Lithuania, Russia and Germany.



The 7th edition of the Wojciech Krawczyk MEMENTO POZNAN Fair will take place in Poznan between the 28th and 30th of November, 2014.

Stands at November's Fair have already been booked by 50 companies.



# 2. Poland and the Polish funerary market AD 2014

## – the organizational aspect cont.

### *The funeral media market*

- ➔ **Funeral Bimonthly *Memento***, a maximum circulation of 1,000, the subscription journal published by the Polish Funeral Association.
- ➔ ***Bulletin of the Polish Funeral Chamber*** the organ of the Polish Funeral Chamber, the free quarterly for members thereof. Contents:
  - organization reporting and publication of correspondence with offices,
  - counseling and legal explanations,
  - presentations of companies and necropolises.
- ➔ **Monthly *Funeral Culture***, published since 2004. No information about its circulation, the subscription magazine published by a private undertaker; texts on funeral subjects, dying and death.





## 2. Poland and the Polish funerary market AD 2014 – the organizational aspect cont.

### *The funeral media market – Funeral Bimonthly Memento*

- ➔ The oldest funeral bimonthly in Poland, founded in 1997 by Wojciech Krawczyk (d. 2009) – the President of the Association of many years' standing and a journalist. The journal of cemetery administrators, undertakers and cemetery and funeral equipment and supplies manufacturers.
- ➔ Program policy:
  - activities involving information, intervention, organization, popularization and promotion towards strengthening the professional and trade position,
  - aiming to enhance the prestige of thanatologists and encourage acting in accordance with the law and fair play rules,
  - merciless fight against the trade's pathologies, such as, for instance, undertakers' presence in hospitals.
- ➔ Patronage and co-organization of trade training courses, major all-Poland trade conferences and the MEMENTO POZNAN Fair.





## 2. Poland and the Polish funerary market AD 2014 – the organizational aspect cont.

### *Local governments and other entities and cemeteries*

The Polish Cemeteries and Burials Act distinguishes 2 basic types of cemeteries.

- ➔ **Municipal cemeteries** – established and administered by districts as part of their own mandatory duties. Decisions to establish and extend municipal cemeteries are made by district/town councils. The responsibility for the administration and maintenance of a necropolis rests with borough leaders/town mayors/presidents.
- ➔ **Religious cemeteries** – established and administered by churches and religious organizations. A religious necropolis is owned by a parish and administered by a parish priest, who may delegate the administration thereof to other persons or entities. In places with a Roman Catholic parish cemetery only, its administrator should allow dead persons of other religions or non-believers, formerly resident in this parish, to be buried there.



## 2. Poland and the Polish funerary market AD 2014 – the organizational aspect cont.

### *Local governments and other entities and cemeteries*

- ➔ There are military cemeteries in Poland, too, whose operation is subject to separate regulations.
- ➔ Under Polish law, a cemetery is a public place.
- ➔ Polish law does not provide for the operation of privately-owned cemeteries.





## 2. Poland and the Polish funerary market AD 2014 – the organizational aspect cont.

### *Local governments and other entities and cemeteries*

- ➔ The legal frame of public-private partnership, existing in Polish law since 2009, enables private entrepreneurs to build cemeteries with ceremonial facilities (chapels, cold stores, office areas) in land made available by district councils at their own expense to further exploit them for several dozen years, which scheme is aimed at disburdening tight district budgets. A necropolis operating within the aforesaid frame is a municipal cemetery owned by a district, with the latter exempted from incurring any expenditure on the construction and maintenance thereof and its infrastructure thanks to a private investor.





## 2. Poland and the Polish funerary market AD 2014 – the organizational aspect cont.

### *Local governments and other entities and cemeteries*

- ➔ There are two such projects being currently implemented in Poland.
  - **In Cracow**, the construction of a necropolis with burial accommodation for 9,000 graves and a building with an incinerator (1,500 m<sup>2</sup>) and parking spaces on a lot with total area of 9 ha (investment of EUR 6.5 million). The firm “Centrum Pogrzebowe” Sp. z o.o. (LLC) will take out a lease on the cemetery for 30 years.



- **The City of Gdansk** w has leased land to a private investor for 23 years within the same legal frame, resolving to build 6 columbaria (2,422 niches) at the expense of over 2 million euro.





# 3. Poland and the Polish funerary market AD 2014 – the legal aspect

## *Polish funeral law and attempts at amending it*

- ➔ The funeral law in force in Poland is obsolete and dispersed throughout numerous legislative acts. Full of loopholes and interpretative ambiguities, it actually dates from 1932 (formally, Act of 1959), by no means fitting in the present-day reality, wherein there has been room for free interplay of market forces. The necessity for amendments thereto has been discussed since 1989. Despite a dozen or so bills presented so far, everything remains unchanged at the moment.
- ➔ The past quarter of the century witnessed the revival of private funeral enterprise, with new forms of burial appearing and funeral customs undergoing change, which should be reflected in the enactment of a new funeral law.
- ➔ Repeated amendments to the antiquated funeral law bear resemblance to attempts at tuning cars which practically can be only consigned to the scrap heap.





# 3. Poland and the Polish funerary market AD 2014

## – the legal aspect cont.

### *Polish funeral law and attempts at amending it*

- ➔ The current Act, in force for 55 years and amended a dozen or so times, needs superseding with a modern law which regulates:
  - a whole of matters concerning new forms of burial (which the Act of 1959 gives no consideration at all), i.e. cremation and procedures for handling human ashes (scattering in gardens of remembrance or any other places of choice),
  - burial of not only Catholics, but also non-believers and deceased of other religions,
  - rules for operation of crematories and cemeteries, requirements for undertakers and funeral parlors,
  - definitions of trade terms,
  - issues concerning international corpse transport, embalming and preserving human remains.
- ➔ Although the Polish Sejm is currently working on a new cemeteries and burials act, there is no telling whether this work will be successfully completed by next year's parliamentary election.



# Directions of the development of the Polish funeral trade in recent years

- ➔ An increase in interest in cremation as a result of reduced funeral payments and the Catholic Church's attitude to this form of interment.
- ➔ Reduced funeral payments to just under 1,000 euro, resulting in Poles' increased interest in any forms of economizing and funeral down payments (final expense insurance taken out in 'direct' form, e.g. by phone).
- ➔ An increase in interest in a non-religious funeral.
- ➔ Construction of new crematories and columbaria, including in smaller localities.
- ➔ Growing market of international corpse transport services; according to the report of the Ministry of the Interior of 2012, there are more than 18 million Poles living abroad.
- ➔ Development of family businesses operating under the name of an owner.





# Directions of the development of the Polish funeral trade in recent years cont.

- ➔ Attempts at organizing networks embracing funeral service undertakings; a network of full funeral services (funeral parlors, monumental masons, grave carers); activities via the Internet and Call Centers.
- ➔ Cooperation of the funeral and insurance sectors, including assistance to families in claiming damages from perpetrators' third party insurance policies.
- ➔ Interest of the financial sector in financing funeral parlors' ongoing business operation. (The ZUS funeral payment lead time may be as long as 60 days.)
- ➔ Creating funeral web portals and virtual cemeteries and using 'close person's grave care' services, especially on the part of representatives of the so called new economic migration.
- ➔ Rotation of funeral service companies, which alternately appear and disappear, with new ones taking their place.
- ➔ EU-funded modernization of companies – grants and loans on preferential terms.



# Directions of the development of the Polish funeral trade in recent years cont.

- ➔ Modernizing and equipping Polish cemeteries with technological innovations:
  - remembrance trails with QR codes and burial ground search engines, coming into use at Poland's major necropolises,
  - protection of cemeteries against vandalism – monitoring,
  - microchips with encoded information about the deceased on a gravestone; the Polish invention: a granite medallion or plaque on a gravestone – data activated by smartphone.
- ➔ Construction of modern funeral homes with full infrastructure.



- ➔ Attention to the high quality of funeral services and means of transport – treating a hearse as the showpiece of a funeral parlor (purchase of cars valued at 100–180 thousand euro).





# Directions of the development of the Polish funeral trade in recent years cont.

- ➔ Extending the offer of funeral supplies by artwork, even designer products – urns with customized ornaments, a photo of the deceased, his/her favorite motif, non-standard shapes.



- ➔ New, bold advertising ideas, e.g. the Lindner Calendar, published cyclically for 5 years now; bearer discount cards – for regular customers of funeral parlors.

- ➔ Renovation, thanks to collections too, of the historic cemeteries; attention to the heritage by building lapidaria, i.e. places where the salvaged period tombstones are stored, vide the Central Cemetery in Szczecin.





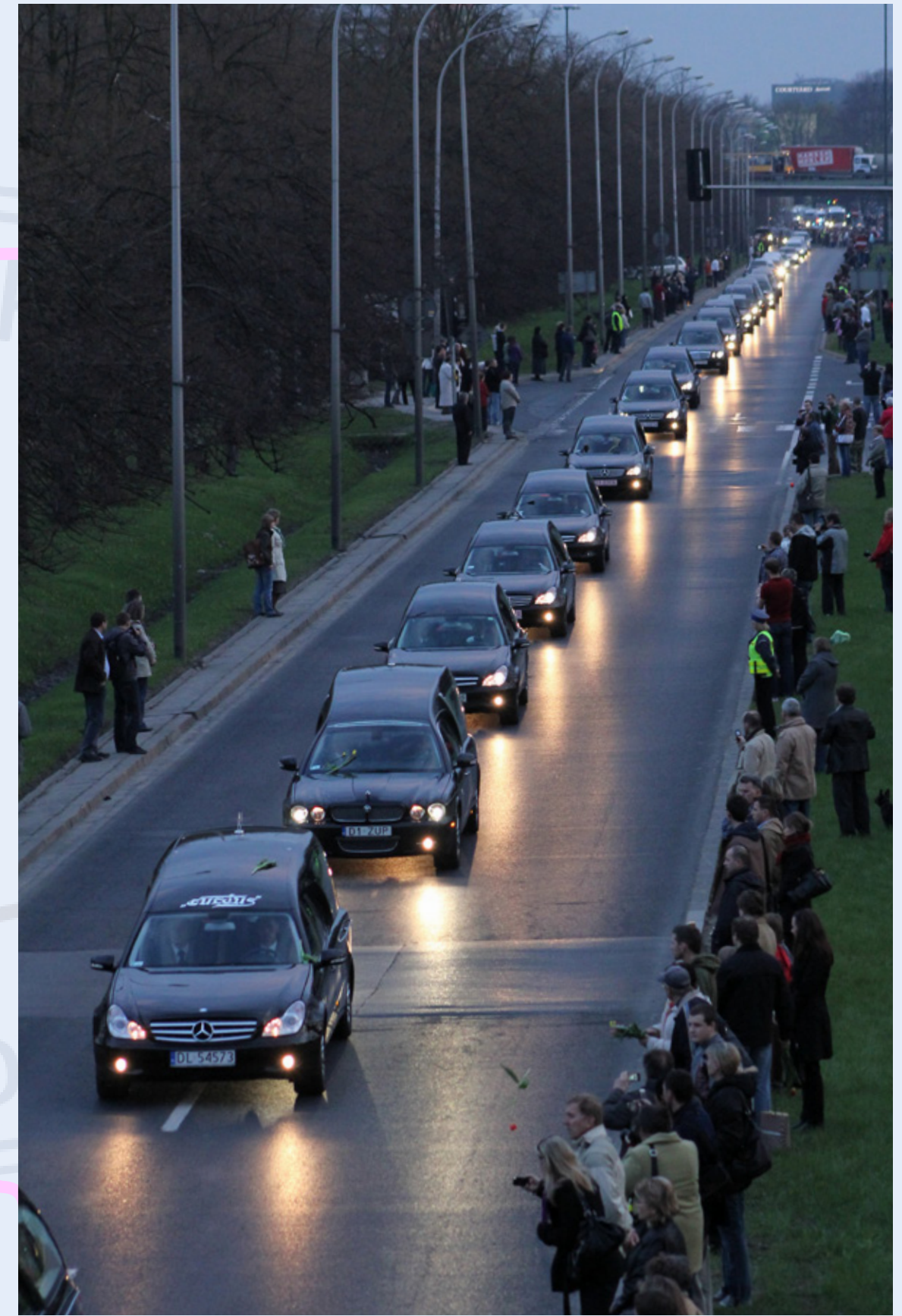
# Challenges to the Polish funeral trade

- New funeral law.
- Common stance on key trade issues to be worked out by the two Polish trade organizations.
- Present and expected further reduction in funeral payments.
- Protection from large foreign funeral service corporations entering the market, posing a threat to small domestic businesses.
- Shortage of burial accommodation at cemeteries and new construction sites and extension grounds therefor; large urban areas have no space for the establishment and extension of necropolises, which must be built outside the city limits, frequently far from the city center.
- Struggling against stereotypes of the trade and improving the image thereof in the media.
- Eradicating unfair competition and monopolization practices (illegal agreements and pacts, grey area, price war).
- Further popularization of cremation and attention to the standard of rendered services.



# As it happened, we had to rise to ...

- ➔ the challenge of organizing the high standard funeral ceremony in honor of the ninety-six TU-154 crash victims of 10 April 2010.





# As it happened, we had to face ...

➔ the Smolensk Crash of 10 April 2010.





# Cultural transformations

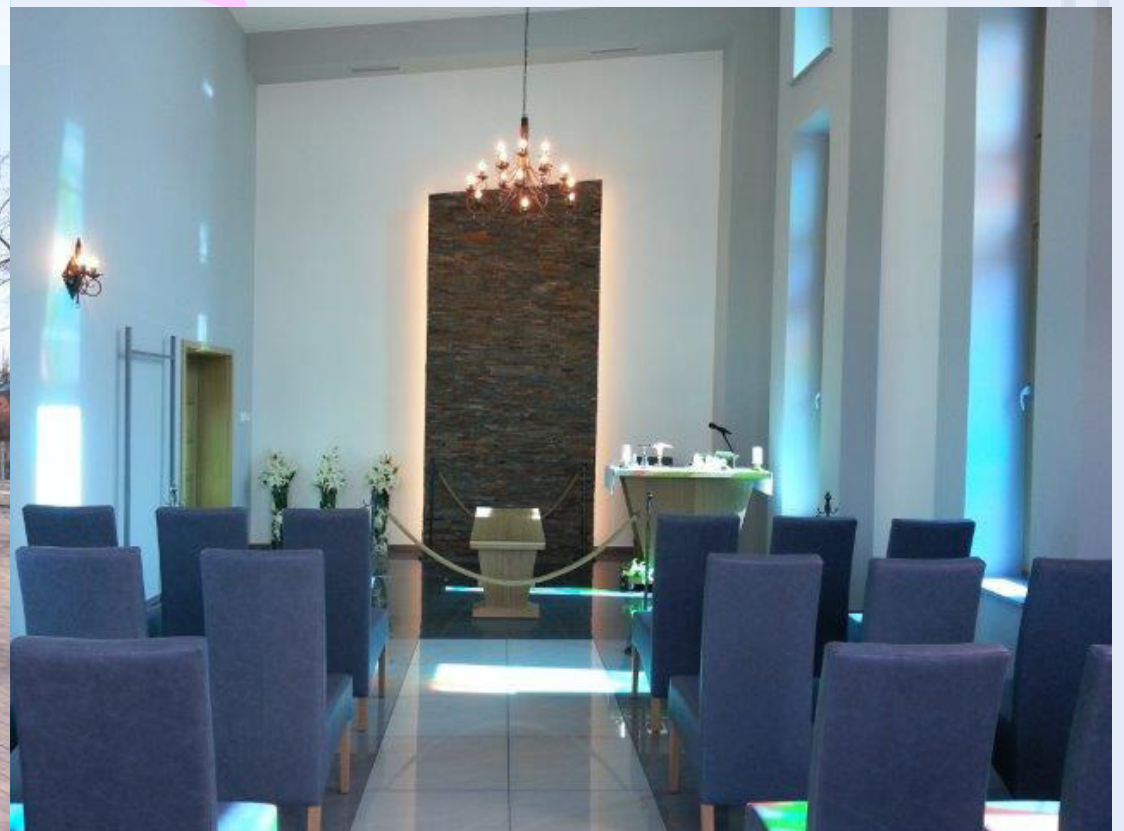
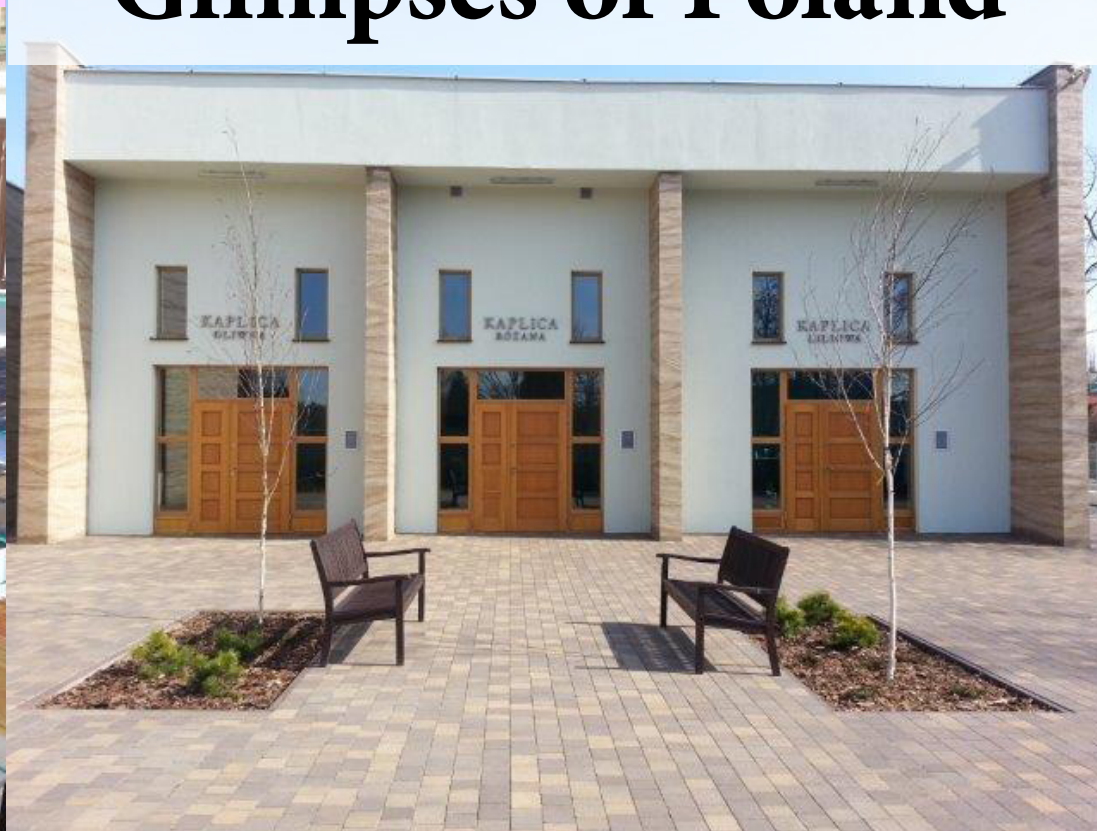
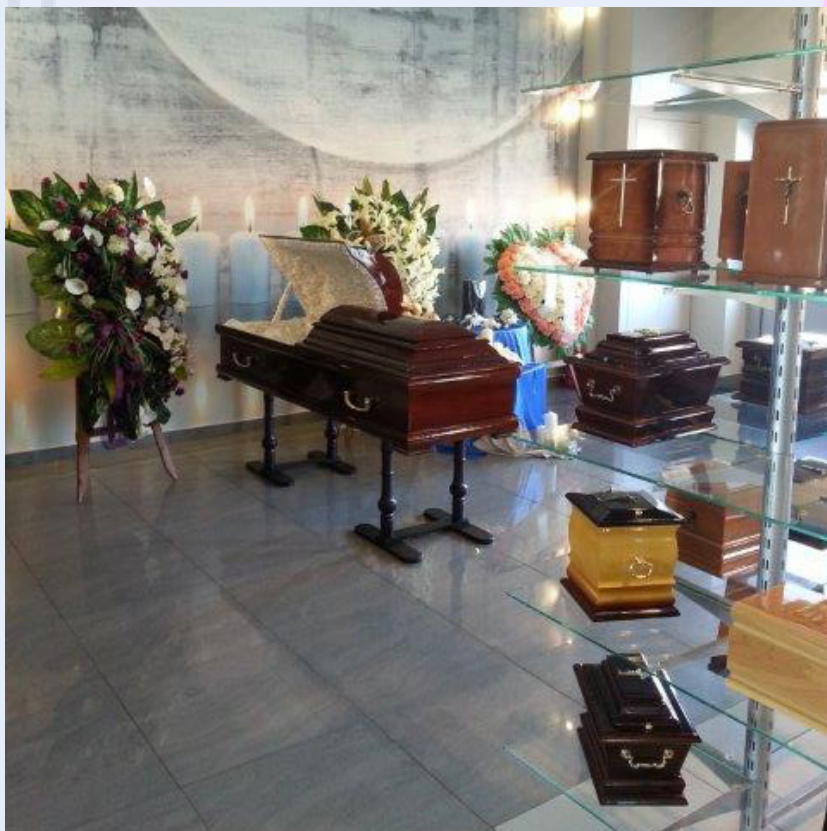
- ➔ New funeral customs emerging, e.g. funerals of motorcyclists and ideas of burying aficionado's ashes in a motorcycle tank – like in urn.
- ➔ Growing interest in open days at Polish crematories, most often organized on the occasion of All Saints' Day.







# Glimpses of Poland





# Glimpses of Poland – Crematories



*Ruda Śląska*



*Toruń*



*Słupsk*



*Bydgoszcz*



*Pruszków near Warsaw*





# Glimpses of Poland – Funeral parlors

*Babice*



*Biała Podlaska*



*Zielona Góra*

*Wyszków*



*Grodzisk Mazowiecki*





# V4 Visegrad Funeral Group





**Thank you for your attention.  
You are welcome to ask questions.**

***Marek Cichewicz***



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