

## **PRESS RELEASE of April 5, 2017**

### **Position of PCEI on the Bill on limiting trading on Sundays**

This is about the Bill initiated by citizens on limiting trade on Sundays and what entrepreneurs associated in Polish Chamber of Exhibition Industry want.

Polish Chamber of Exhibition Industry, Association of Exhibition Organizers, Polish Chamber of Books, Polish Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Construction Sector and Chamber of Commerce "Grono Targowe Kielce" are just some of the economic organizations which have recently sent protests to the Commission for Social Policy and Family. They protest against the bill on limiting trading on Sundays (Parliamentary Paper 870) which will actually affect the sectors which participate in trade fairs and exhibitions. "Trade and performance of other sales activities on Sundays in sales establishments shall be prohibited" is the wording of the bill. Exemptions from the ban concern pharmacies, petrol stations and kiosks.

The amendment proposed by PCEI - exemption of trade fairs and exhibitions from the ban on Sunday trading - will not affect the very act in its primary scope, however it can have a positive influence on the further development of Polish service providers, small and medium-sized enterprises, the level of knowledge and life of the society, as well as on the economic development of cities and regions where exhibitions are organized. After all it is a common knowledge that exhibitions have a significant impact on the economy, its innovativeness and growth.

The position of the Government (from 22.03.2017) towards the bill initiated by citizens shows that the Government is aware of the need to exempt "occasional trade fairs" from the provisions of the new law (quote: "goods exchanges, street markets, fairs, trade fairs organized occasionally and topical exchanges"), however this term has never been clarified. Will a trade fair organized cyclically, on the same weekend of the year, be considered an occasional fair? Economic chambers fear that freedom of interpretation of this phrase will prevent the organization of many popular trade fairs and exhibitions.

Many events related to business (construction, cosmetology), consumers (housing, wedding, garden, tourist), as well as to culture (book fairs), are held for several days, including Sundays. Apart from promoting their companies and brands, exhibitor also sell, and not only to retailers. Products at exhibitions are often available at promotional prices; they are bought from the manufacturer and the consumer can find out more about the goods than during a typical purchase transaction. Exhibitions often have premières of various products which are yet unavailable in regular trade. For many small and medium sized enterprises, especially of service character, and for many end users, Sunday is a perfect day to spend at the fair and learn more about the offer: a hairdresser or a beautician do not have to close their businesses to go to the fair; a consumer is not going to take a day off to meet the author and buy his or her book. "The possibility of trading at fairs and exhibitions allows their participants to immediately and directly achieve their objective, which is establishing commercial cooperation", we can read further in the letter by PCEI.

The foundation of the bill on prohibition of trading on Sundays is the care for the welfare of citizens, limiting their work and the time they spend away from their families. From the perspective of companies which participate in trade fairs and exhibitions, the bill - with or without the amendments - will change nothing in this respect: they will still work at the stand of their companies and they will simply not "perform sales activities". They will have talks, meetings, they will promote their products, and the only difference will be that they will not sell them.

The lawmakers refer to the examples from the Western Europe: "limitations of trade on Sundays exist of various forms in the majority of Western European countries: in Austria, Germany, France, Switzerland, Great Britain, Belgium and Denmark". The examples are correct, however in those countries the legislator did not apply the ban to trade fairs and similar events - fairs and street markets. So the same exemption from the ban on trading on Sundays is expected by Polish economic chambers. Lack of such an exemption will not affect solely, or even mostly, exhibition organizers - it will influence, above all, Polish small and medium sized enterprises of various sectors and it will have an impact on consumers. There is nothing wrong with a Sunday visit at a gardening fair and buying products which will make our gardens look nicer; there is no harm in attending a product presentation after which you can buy it - even on Sunday. Book fairs all over Poland are held also on Sundays in order to offer readers from small towns, which sometimes do not have bookshops, a chance to buy books at an affordable price, sometimes signed by the author. In the times when many bookshops and libraries are being closed down, preventing people from buying books during Sunday fairs will definitely not improve Polish reading habits, which after all is an important issue.

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#### About Polish Chamber of Exhibition Industry

Polish Chamber of Exhibition Industry, founded in 1993, is the only national organization of Polish enterprises leading their business activity in the exhibition industry. The members of PCEI belong to all categories of players on the exhibition market. They are especially: trade fair and exhibition organizers, operators of trade fair and conference venues in Poland, providers of trade fair services such as designing construction and furnishing of exhibition stands, transport and forwarding companies, organizers of foreign trade fair participations, foreign trade fair representatives in Poland, as well as advertising and marketing agencies, media companies, enterprises offering catering and accommodation services.

The PCEI mission is: to provide a comprehensive platform of co-operation and exchanging ideas and experiences for the Polish exhibition market players, to serve the Polish exhibition industry as an effective platform for lobbying, to promote participation in exhibitions as an effective part of corporate marketing and communication strategy, to create circumstances for improving the industry quality standards, including reliable and transparent exhibition statistics, to offer trade fair marketing education in cooperation with marketing specialists, the university lecturers, to create favourable conditions for the Members to enjoy the benefits of integration and cooperation within the Chamber.

The four main areas of activities of Polish Chamber of Exhibition Industry are: lobbying, actions facilitating the integration of trade fair industry, widely understood promotion of trade fairs and exhibitions – including publications, as well as education in the area of trade fair marketing and promotion of ethical business activities in the industry.

PCEI has been an active member of UFI – the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry since 1996. For many years PCEI has been cooperating on a regular basis with CENTREX – International Exhibition Statistics Union, AUMA – the Association of the German Exhibition Industry and many other foreign and international industry organizations.

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