



**POLISH AMERICAN**  
CHAMBER of COMMERCE  
IN TEXAS



# Polish-Texan Business Review

## Q1-Q2 2024 Inaugural Edition

Official Business Magazine of the Polish American Chamber of Commerce in Texas



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## 01

## Foreword from the Chairman

Dear Readers,

It is with great pleasure and anticipation that we introduce the inaugural edition of the business magazine of the Polish American Chamber of Commerce in Texas. As Chairman and members of the Board, we are excited about the possibilities this new initiative brings for promoting the chamber, attracting new members, and fostering increased interest and engagement within the business community.

This magazine represents a significant step forward in our ongoing efforts to strengthen ties between Poland and Texas, two regions rich in opportunity and innovation. By providing a dedicated space to showcase the diverse array of business ventures and collaborative endeavors between our respective communities, we hope to inspire, inform, and connect individuals and organizations eager to explore new horizons and expand their networks.

At the heart of our mission lies a commitment to facilitating meaningful business cooperation that transcends borders and enriches both economies. Through the articles, interviews, and event calendars featured in this publication, we aim to highlight the myriad opportunities available for partnership and growth, while also celebrating the achievements and contributions of our members.

We extend our sincere gratitude to all who have contributed to bringing this magazine to life, and we invite you to join us on this journey as we continue to build bridges, foster connections, and promote business excellence between Poland and Texas.

Thank you for your support, and we look forward to the exciting developments that lie ahead.

Warm regards,

*Dr. Art Dunal*

**Art Dunal, PhD**

President & Chairman  
Polish-American Chamber of Commerce in Texas





## 02

Editor's  
Note

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the inaugural edition of Polish-Texas Business Review, the official business magazine of the Polish-American Chamber of Commerce in Texas!

As the editor of this exciting new venture, I am thrilled to present you with a publication dedicated to fostering connections, sharing insights, and showcasing the dynamic business landscape between Texas and Poland. Our magazine will provide a regular dose of news, analysis, and features related to the Polish-Texas business cooperation. Importantly, we are also aiming to serve as a business advocate of not just Poland, but the entire Central Eastern Europe region, in which Poland is the leading economy.

In each edition, you can expect a curated calendar of the most important business events related to Polish-Texan business, ensuring you stay informed and engaged with key opportunities and developments. Additionally, we will feature articles spotlighting Texan/American companies making strides in Poland, Polish companies flourishing in Texas, and insightful interviews with Polish professionals thriving in Texas and Texan professionals making waves in Poland.

Our objective is clear: to deliver a high-quality publication formatted as a business magazine, offering valuable content that informs, inspires, and connects our readership. Moreover, this magazine serves as a platform for companies to promote their activities, showcasing their achievements and contributions to the vibrant Polish-Texan business community.

Thank you for joining us on this journey. We look forward to sharing stories, forging connections, and celebrating the ongoing success of the Polish-American Chamber of Commerce in Texas.

Warm regards,

*Jakub A. Bartoszewski*

**Jakub A. Bartoszewski**

Editor-in-Chief





## 03

## Who Are We?

Introducing the Polish-American Chamber of Commerce in Texas

Established in 2017 in Houston, the Polish American Chamber of Commerce in Texas stands as a beacon of business collaboration between Poland and the Lone Star State. As a non-profit organization, our core mission revolves around fostering robust business relationships linking Texas and Poland. Importantly, we are also aiming to serve as an advocate of the economic interests of the entire Central Eastern Europe (CEE) region in which Poland is the largest economy.



## Poland: Europe's Growth Champion and a Gateway to the CEE Region

Poland's emergence as Europe's most recent economic miracle story cannot be overstated. Over the past three decades, Poland has undergone a remarkable transformation, from a centrally-planned economy with an autocratic political system to a thriving democracy with a flourishing market economy. Today, Poland stands as Europe's growth champion, boasting 30 years of continuous economic expansion. With a highly educated workforce, excellent infrastructure, strategic location at the heart of Europe, business-friendly climate, low taxes, and competitive costs, Poland presents unparalleled opportunities for American companies seeking to invest in Europe.

The case of Poland is also a success story representative of the CEE region, which comprises the most dynamically growing economies in Europe. The CEE has become the fastest-growing region within the European Union, attracting significant foreign investment and experiencing rapid economic expansion. This is the part of Europe that will see the most dynamic growth in the coming decades. Importantly, in recent years, Poland and the entire CEE have witnessed a surge in energy cooperation with Texas. Texan LNG, crude oil and petroleum products are now daily en route to this region. Furthermore, the changing geopolitical landscape is also creating a need to reorganize supply chains. CEE is a very attractive destination for companies in need of friendshoring.



## Texas: Economic Powerhouse of 21st Century America

Similarly, Texas stands out as one of the fastest-growing states in the United States, offering a dynamic business environment ripe for investment. With its robust economy, 2nd largest in the United States and 8th largest in the world, diverse industries, excellent infrastructure, cheap energy, abundant workforce and welcoming business climate, Texas serves as an ideal destination for European companies, including those from Poland and the CEE, looking to expand their footprint in the American market. The natural synergies between Poland and Texas are undeniable—both economies are characterized by rapid growth, abundant opportunities, and a spirit of innovation.



## Beyond Economics: Fostering Community and Collaboration



Beyond the economic landscape, our organization also recognizes the importance of fostering a sense of community among Polish professionals residing in Texas. As the Polish diaspora continues to grow in the Lone Star State, we aim to

provide a platform for networking, collaboration, and mutual support, ensuring that the talents and contributions of Polish professionals are recognized and celebrated. Moreover, we acknowledge the increasing interest of American businesses in Poland and the challenges they may face in navigating a new market. That's why our mission extends to facilitating networking opportunities, connecting American businesses with the right people, resources, and opportunities in Poland. Whether it's forging strategic partnerships, accessing local expertise, or navigating cultural nuances, we are committed to guiding businesses through every step of their journey towards success in Poland.

At our essence, we are facilitators, connectors, and advocates for businesses of all sizes, from burgeoning startups to towering multinational corporations, on both sides of the Atlantic. Our commitment to inclusivity knows no bounds—we eagerly welcome partnerships with governmental bodies, academic institutions, and non-profit organizations, recognizing the value each entity brings to the table in advancing our shared objectives.





**Art Dunal, PhD**  
President and  
Chairman of the Board

Art is a seasoned finance and management executive, holding a Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Gdańsk and an MSc in Economics specializing in IT and Econometrics from the Poznań University of Economics. Currently serving as the Vice President and CFO at Dover Precision Components (an operating company within NYSE: DOV, S&P 500), Art's career spans significant roles in multinational corporations.

He began his career as an auditor at Ernst & Young before moving on to become the Chief Accountant - Controller at Scania. From 2012 to 2016, Art served as the Country Finance Manager and Finance Business Partner at Rolls-Royce, responsible for maritime operations in Poland, Norway, Sweden, and Finland.

In 2016, Art relocated to Houston, Texas, assuming the role of Regional Finance Manager for North America at Rolls-Royce Marine North America. In 2019, he followed Rolls-Royce Marine carve-out and joined Kongsberg, a leading Norwegian technological firm. Later, from 2021 to 2023, he held the position of Senior Finance Director at Shape, a Private Equity Portfolio company.

Art is also an author of publications in the fields of strategic management and financial planning in academic and industry journals. He has undergone professional development in various countries, including Germany, Norway, the United Kingdom, Sweden, and the United States. His achievements include being recognized as one of the Top 25 CFOs in Houston for 2024 by Top CFOs Magazine



**Gabi Czesak**  
Board Member

Gabi, the visionary co-founder of Design Allies, a digital product design studio, and 25wat, a growth marketing agency, stands as a prominent figure in the realm of UX/UI design. With a wealth of experience in product design, she is renowned for her innovative approach, exceptional problem-solving skills, and the development of effective marketing strategies. Gabi's career has been dedicated to crafting cutting-edge products, cultivating ecosystems that enhance customer and partner effectiveness, and even creating her own client-beloved products. Her expertise also extends to engaging marketing initiatives that capture customer attention and heighten brand awareness. Under Gabi's leadership, Design Allies and 25wat are not just companies; they serve as beacons of creativity, innovation, and unparalleled design expertise. She moved to Texas in the fall of 2023 and is now based in Austin.



**Slawek Pankowski**  
Vice President and  
Board Member

Slawomir is a highly accomplished maritime professional with a Master of Science degree, obtained upon graduating from Gdynia Maritime University in 2002.

He began his career as a junior officer, gaining invaluable experience on various vessels. Joining Chipolbrok lines in 2005, he swiftly advanced within the company and earned the esteemed position of ship Captain in 2012. In 2014, he joined Chipolbrok America Inc at Houston, TX, assuming the role of President in 2016. As President, he demonstrates exceptional leadership, guiding the company towards continued success and establishing a strong presence in the maritime industry.



**Maciej Bagiński**  
Board Member

Maciej is a seasoned international grants expert with over two decades of experience, serving as the proprietor of EUROLEADER, a consulting firm active in Poland and in the United States. Renowned for pioneering and executing Research and Development initiatives, he specializes in crafting compelling grant proposals. As a technology professional, Maciej is immersed in advancing innovative projects. His educational background is in international law.

With a rich history of collaboration with startups and fostering innovation, Maciej has provided support to over 2,000 pioneering projects across Europe. Noteworthy partnerships include engagements with esteemed institutions such as the Polish Armaments Group, the Polish Academy of Sciences, the Medical University of Warsaw, and the AGH University of Science and Technology in Kraków and the Copernicus Center in Chicago.



**Magdalena Milewska**  
Director of Operations  
and Treasurer

Magda is a highly effective human resources professional with 11 years of proven and awarded experience in recruitment, training, and raising employee efficiency gained in Antal International and People Ltd. She has worked with international companies from different sectors, including FMCG, financial shared service centers, real estate, consulting, pharma & medical devices, manufacturing. Magda holds a Masters of Science in Human Resources Management from The Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń. Since August 2018 Magda has been based in Katy, Texas with her husband and three children.



**Thalia Krüger**  
Secretary and Founding  
Board Member

Thalia, a SNAME (Society of Naval Architects & Marine Engineers) Fellow, is a Naval Architect and Marine Engineer who serves as Business Development Director and US Country Manager at Neko Energy US.

Thalia earned her MSc degree in Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering at the Shipbuilding Institute of the Gdansk University of Technology in Poland, where she studied after being awarded a full scholarship by the Ecuadorian government. She has extensive experience in the Marine and Offshore sectors, honing her technical skills and taking on strategic account management and business development responsibilities. She began her career as a programmer and designer, advancing to positions such as shipyard project engineer, marine inspections chief surveyor, technical superintendent, entrepreneur, principal engineer, project manager, global offshore account manager, senior marine/offshore/wind consultant, and senior business development manager.

Representing professional societies such as SNAME and ASME, Thalia has made positive and impactful contributions to the industry by organizing high-level panel discussions and technical sessions at various industry forums (OTC, SNAME Offshore Symposium, SNAME Maritime Convention) on relevant topics, followed by actions and publications that have received awards.

She is an engaging mentor with a passion for promoting education, especially empowering women in STEM careers, particularly in the Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering fields. As an influential industry leader committed to participating in the energy transition, Thalia focuses on bridging the gap between energy innovators and other industry leaders, accelerating the commercialization of clean and efficient technologies for a sustainable future.



**Jim Mazurkiewicz, PhD**  
Founding Board Member

Jim serves as a Regents Fellow, Leadership Program Director and Professor of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. He is a fifth generation Polish American and a native of the Brazos Valley. Jim's family originally settled in Washington County at the end of the 19th century and they still own and operate the family farm in Chappell Hill, Texas. He graduated from Waller High School and received a B.S. and Ph.D. from Texas A&M University and a Masters from Texas Tech University. He is currently President of the Polish American Council of Texas, an organization bringing together all of Texas Polonia. Jim is vested in building bridges between Poland and Texas, which include academic, cultural and business exchange. Jim has been the recipient of several awards and some of these include the Regents Fellow in 2012, the Bryan /College Station Volunteer of the Year Award in 2013, the Medal of Merit from the Polish President in 2016 and the Medal of Honor from the Polish Minister of Agriculture in 2011. Jim married Kathy Gore from Houston in 1978 and they are proud parents of three children.







**Waldemar Priebe, PhD**  
Founding Board Member

Dr. Waldemar Priebe is a distinguished scientist and a global authority in the field of medicinal chemistry. He holds the position of Professor of Medicinal Chemistry in the Department of Experimental Therapeutics, Division of Cancer Medicine at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. He also holds the title of Professor of Chemistry in the Republic of Poland, granted in 2004 by the President of Poland, Aleksander Kwaśniewski, in recognition of his seminal contributions in the field of Chemistry. His research is focused on the discovery and development of new anticancer therapies and, more recently, therapies for infectious diseases. He has published more than 200 peer-reviewed journal articles, and his work has led to over 70 patents and numerous licenses by pharmaceutical companies. He is also a founder of 6 biotechnology companies, 4 of which, after successful IPOs, were listed on NASDAQ. Dr. Priebe is a graduate of Warsaw University and a PhD program at the Polish Academy of Sciences. He actively fosters collaboration between academic institutions in Texas and Poland, with over 40 Polish researchers having trained in his laboratory. In 2013, he received the Medal of the Polish Academy of Sciences and the Order of Polonia Restituta (Officer's Cross Class) awarded by the President of Poland, Bronisław Komorowski. In 2015, Dr. Priebe was appointed by the President of Poland, Andrzej Duda, to the National Development Council of Poland (Narodowa Rada Rozwoju) and received the Outstanding Polish Scientist Award. In 2023, Dr. Priebe received an honorary degree (Doctor Honoris Causa) from Białystok University of Technology in recognition of his academic achievements and fostering cooperation between Polish and American academia. He is also a Board Member of the Polish-American Council of Texas and a Trustee of the Kościuszko Foundation, as well as President of the foundation's Texas Chapter. Dr. Priebe and his wife, Dr. Teresa Szwarocka-Priebe, reside in Houston and have two daughters, Anna and Elizabeth, and a son, Christopher.



**Adam Urban**  
Founding Board Member

Adam has held various production, operations, technical leadership and corporate strategy roles across Shell's upstream deepwater and onshore businesses since 2005. A native of the Upper Silesia region of Poland, he holds a Masters degree in Chemical Engineering from the University of Michigan and has lived in Texas and Brazil. Currently he is based in Houston as the Production Excellence Lead for Shell's Canadian and Argentine assets. Adam's main passions include mentoring students and junior employees, supporting the Polish communities of Houston & of his hometown and outdoor activities in the mountains.



**Greg Kusinski, PhD**  
Founding Board Member

Greg serves as the Team Lead for Regulatory Affairs within the Gulf of Mexico Business Unit at Chevron. In this capacity, he spearheads the development of regulatory strategies for major capital projects and technology qualification. With over 25 years of experience in the energy industry, Greg has held diverse roles encompassing major capital project execution, regulatory compliance, and technology development and commercialization.

Greg earned his B.S., M.S., and Ph.D. degrees in Engineering from UC Berkeley, augmenting his academic achievements with an Executive MBA focused on Corporate Strategy and Finance from Rice University. Additionally, he completed the Management of Technology program at UC Berkeley.

Active within his industry, Greg chairs the Technology Policy Committee of the NOIA, was elected to the Executive Committee of ASME Petroleum Division and is a member of the Board of Directors for OTC. Greg is also active in the academic institutions, as a Board Member and President of the Rice Jones School Business Partners and serves as an Advisory Board Member for the UC Berkeley Materials Science Department and UC San Diego Nanoengineering. He supports the Oceans Energy Safety Institute as a chair of the Industry Advisory Board.



**Mat Podskarbi**  
Founding Board Member

Mat is an experienced sales and business development leader with a focus on technology commercialization, product management, and strategic sales. He is currently the Data Infrastructure Lead at AVEVA. Previously, he was the SVP of Business Development and Product at Akseos, MIT spin-off backed by Shell. Mat has also held significant roles at Yokogawa and Schlumberger. He is a founding member and President of the Polish American Chamber of Commerce in Texas and mentors at the University of Houston Wolff Center for Entrepreneurship. Mat holds a Master's Degree in Structural Engineering from Cracow University of Technology.



**Zbigniew Wojciechowski**  
Founding Board Member

Zbigniew is an Associate Professor of Clinical Anesthesiology at the Institute for Academic Medicine at the Houston Methodist Hospital (Weill Cornell Medical College). He obtained his MD at the Jagiellonian University School of Medicine (Kraków, Poland) and his Clinical Fellowship at the University of Washington. Zbigniew served the Houston Polish community as the Honorary Consul of the Republic of Poland from 2003 until the opening of the new Polish Consulate in 2017. He is also the lead organizer of the annual Polish Film Festival in Houston.



**Horacio Licon**  
Founding Board Member

Horacio is Director of Energy and Sustainability Partnerships at the International Rescue Committee. Previously, he was Partnerships Director for CERAWEEK, Vice President of International Investment & Trade at the Greater Houston Partnership and World Bank's Private Sector Liaison Officer for Texas. In prior roles, he created the global market research unit for Mexico's largest company, PEMEX on international procurement. He was Head of Trade & Investment and Energy at the British Consulate General in Houston and Deputy Head of Trade and Investment at the British Embassy in Mexico City. He holds a Bachelors of Science in Industrial & Systems Engineering from Tecnológico de Monterrey.



**Piotr Przybylski, PhD**  
Energy Industry Advisor

Piotr is an accomplished Geoscientist and Engineer with over 20 years of experience in the Oil&Gas Industry and Academia. He holds a PhD in Geophysics (Purdue University) as well as Masters in Mining & Geology (Kraków, Poland) and Masters in Mine Surveying & Geodesy (Freiberg, Germany). As a former Deputy Lead of the Unconventional Resources CoP at BP, Piotr is an expert in sharing the best practices and recent technologies in shales, tight sands, conventional sands, and carbonates. He is currently working for Berger Geosciences LLC as a Geohazard Geologist III, where he estimates drilling hazards for planned oil & gas offshore wells. Piotr is also a liaison between Berger Geosciences and Poland for offshore wind projects in the Baltic Sea.









## 04

## PolChamTX Insider News & Events

In this section, we're presenting news from PolChamTX's activity, as well as events related to Polish-Texan business cooperation, highlighting initiatives organized by both PolChamTX and our valued partners. Stay informed as we explore the diverse landscape of business relations between Poland and Texas.

### Throwback to PolChamTX's 2023 Annual Gala Dinner

On December 2nd, 2023 PolChamTX held its inaugural Annual Gala Dinner at the illustrious ballroom of the Polish Community Center on Blalock Rd in Houston. It was a night to remember, as the event drew in around 100 esteemed guests for this exciting evening of celebration and networking in a great setting. Among the distinguished attendees were representatives from notable companies such as Orlen, ExxonMobil, and Chevron.

Dressed in their finest black-tie attire, attendees were treated to an unforgettable experience, made possible by the generous support of our sponsors. A special thank you to Polish Investment and Trade Agency in Houston, Moleculin Biotech, ChipolBrok America, Kyotu Technology, Euroleader LLC, Dr. Jim & Mrs Kathy Mazurkiewicz and Mrs Thalia Kruger.

The evening commenced with a welcome cocktail, followed by inspiring opening remarks from PolChamTX President, Dr. Art Dunal, and Vice President, Slawek Piankowski, highlighting the importance of Polish-Texan business collaboration.

Guests then indulged in a sumptuous 3-dish menu provided by Leona's Bakeshop.

The highlight of the evening was the awards ceremony, where we had the privilege of honoring outstanding individuals in our community. Mr. Walter Klemp of Moleculin Biotech was recognized as Entrepreneur of the Year, while Dr. Jim Mazurkiewicz received the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award, acknowledging his remarkable contributions to the Polish-Texan business landscape.

As the night drew to a close, it was clear that the first-ever PolChamTX Annual Gala Dinner had exceeded all expectations, leaving guests inspired and eager for more. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all who attended and contributed to the success of this unforgettable event.

Mark your calendars and join us for our next Gala Dinner on December 7th 2024. Together, let's continue to forge new connections, celebrate achievements, and continue fostering Polish-Texan business cooperation!



# PolChamTX Updates

## 01

The Polish-American Chamber of Commerce in Texas convened for its Annual Meeting on March 18th 2024 at Chipolbrok America at 14788 Heahtrow Forest Pkwy in Houston.

## 02

Board members active in the year 2023 were re-elected through acclamation, demonstrating a strong vote of confidence in their continued leadership.

## 03

In addition to the re-elected members, the chamber proudly welcomed two new individuals to its board, Gabi Czesak and Maciej Baginski.

# Recent and Upcoming Events

- Dec 2 2023**  
PolChamTX 1st Annual Gala Dinner
  - Jan 9-12 2024**  
Polish Investment and Trade Agency Houston Office at the CES Expo
  - Feb 2024**  
Visit of Polish agricultural equipment companies, SaMASZ and Mzuri World
  - Feb 2024**  
Visit of Igor Janke, Polish Journalist. Link to his interview with Dr. Jim Mazurkiewicz
  - Mar 2024**  
Delegation of 26 Polish agriculture professionals to Texas, led by Dr. Jim Mazurkiewicz
  - Mar 5 2024**  
Webinar on promoting Polish IT sector in the US by Polish Investment and Trade Agency Houston Office
  - Mar 2024**  
High school exchange of students from Stefan Banach High School in Toruń, hosted by Dr. Jim Mazurkiewicz
  - Mar 12 2024**  
Polish Networking Night at South by Southwest
- Mar 18 2024**  
Polish Day at GDC Office
  - Mar 19 2024**  
Orlen Networking Cocktail at CERAWEEK
  - Apr 7 - 14 2024**  
Screening of "The Peasants", Poland's 2024 Oscar-nominated movie, at MFA in Houston
  - May 7 - 10 2024**  
Delegation of US IT companies to Poland
  - May 16 2024 at 6 pm**  
PolChamTX Happy Hour at Batch in Austin
  - May 3 - 5 2024**  
Houston Polish Festival in Houston
  - May 19 - Jun 1 2024**  
Delegation of 24 Texas agriculture professionals from the Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership (TALL) Program going to Poland, led by Dr. Jim Mazurkiewicz
  - Jun 3 - 6 2024**  
Polish Investment and Trade Agency Houston Office at the BIO International Convention
- Jun 18 - 21 2024**  
Delegation of US cybersecurity companies to Poland
  - Jun 25 2024**  
Webinar on PAX West by Polish Investment and Trade Agency Houston Office
  - Aug 30 - Sep 2 2024**  
Polish Investment and Trade Agency Houston Office at Pax WEST
  - Sep 10 2024**  
Webinar for Polish software houses seeking to enter the US market by Polish Investment and Trade Agency Houston Office
  - Oct 28 - 30 2024**  
Polish Investment and Trade Agency Houston Office at TechCrunch Disrupt
  - Dec 7 2024**  
PolChamTX 2nd Annual Gala Dinner









Polish Investment  
& Trade Agency  
PFR Group

# 05

## Our Partners Polish Investment & Trade Agency

In this series of articles we would like to present to you our business and institutional partners. In this first edition of our quarterly magazine, we are honored to introduce you to the Polish Investment and Trade Agency.

### About us

The Polish Investment and Trade Agency office in Houston is part of a 60-office worldwide network. The Agency's mission is to help Polish entrepreneurs launch their goods and services globally and to encourage investment in Poland. The organization serves as the first point of contact for exporters and investors operating in dozens of markets globally. It also provides free consulting to grow and promote Polish businesses.

### Why Poland?

Poland stands as Europe's most recent economic miracle, with a remarkable three-decade streak of uninterrupted growth. It now ranks as the EU's 6th largest economy, characterized by a well-balanced mix of services, agriculture, and industry. The nation teems with business opportunities, owing in part to its rapid infrastructure modernization, including unparalleled advancements in road and rail transportation, as well as energy infrastructure. Positioned strategically, Poland is poised to emerge as the economic powerhouse of Central Eastern Europe, a market boasting 194 million consumers and a GDP exceeding \$5 trillion.

Poland's greatest asset lies in its citizens: well-educated, inherently ambitious, and characterized by strong work ethics and entrepreneurial spirit. Particularly noteworthy is the proficiency of Polish citizens in STEM subjects, ranking 3rd in math in Europe and 10th globally in data science skills, according to Coursera's Global Skills Index.



## Our Team in Texas

The US network of the Polish Investment and Trade Agency consists of four offices: Houston, New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles.

The Houston office was established in 2019. Zuzanna Kobrzynski and Paulina Mieczkowska have been with the office from its inception. Throughout its five-year presence they have helped hundreds of Polish entrepreneurs expand their US client base, guided several investment projects both for American and Polish companies, hosted trade missions, and organized Polish Pavilions at trade shows across the US.

They recently added two new staffers to the team this year, Urszula Czuba and Krzysztof Hajlasz. Urszula is working on helping Polish IT companies expand to the US and promoting the Polish IT sector in the US. Her position is funded by the Ministry of Digitization of Poland. Krzysztof, relocated from the Agency's headquarters in Warsaw to Houston. While in Warsaw, he was the Agency's sector expert for IT. He will use that background to also promote the Polish IT sector in the US; however he will also focus on sector agnostic projects.



### Contact us

Please reach out to Zuzanna Kobrzynski at [Zuzanna.Kobrzynski@paih.gov.pl](mailto:Zuzanna.Kobrzynski@paih.gov.pl) if you have any additional questions.



PolChamTX







CERAWeek

CER

06

## Special Interview: Dr. Adam Czyżewski

*We are proud to present a Special Interview with Dr. Adam Czyżewski, Chief Economist of ORLEN, Poland's premier energy company. ORLEN is the largest company in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and a driving force for the energy transition in the region. We spoke to Dr. Czyżewski at CERAWeek 2024, where he led ORLEN's delegation to present the "CEE Energy Outlook", a report examining the CEE region's energy challenges and opportunities. Join us to learn more about ORLEN's activities and Dr. Czyżewski's insights into the company's pivotal role in shaping the future of energy in the CEE.*

**Jakub Bartoszewski (JB): Dr. Czyżewski, welcome to Houston! Thank you very much for making the time to speak with us. Could you please start by telling our readers about your role at ORLEN?**

**Dr. Adam Czyżewski (AC):** At ORLEN, I work as the Chief Economist and have been with the company since 2007. My focus is on global energy markets and understanding how they change under the influence of regulation and new technologies, impacting energy prices and security. I'm responsible for macroeconomic assumptions both in the short and long term. Geopolitical events play a crucial role in the short term, affecting prices through expectations, especially regarding the risk of supply disruptions. Unfortunately, these events are unpredictable. Hence, my primary interest lies in long-term processes, known as mega-trends, rooted in demographics, incomes, and technological advancements. Conceptually, it resembles compound interest – systematic investment yields expected results over time. These processes can be analyzed scenario by scenario. In terms of mega-trends, an important area of my professional interest is scenarios concerning energy and climate policies and new technologies and their impact on our company. Consequently, I work with ORLEN's strategy department on a regular basis.

**Great, thank you for that introduction. Sounds like you have a lot to do in a world that's changing so quickly. So, what are ORLEN's primary activities?**

**AC:** ORLEN, established in 1999 through the merger of a refinery and a network of petrol stations in Poland, stands as the largest multi-energy company in Central and Eastern Europe today. With 7 refineries in Poland, Lithuania, and the Czech Republic, processing a total of 860,000 barrels of oil per day, and 3,200 service stations across 6 countries, we boast the largest network in the region.



Our petrochemical assets are fully integrated with refining assets, and we sell petrochemical products in 60 countries. Additionally, we engage in oil and gas production both onshore and offshore in Poland, Norway, and Canada. As the largest supplier and importer of gas for businesses and households in Poland, we supplement domestic gas production with pipeline imports from Norway and LNG supplies from the US. Active in the power generation industry, we possess an installed capacity of 5.5 GW of electricity and 13.9 GWt of heat. Over 60% of our electricity generation derives from zero and low-emission sources, including RES and modern CCGT units. Committed to reducing carbon emissions to net zero by 2050, we are undergoing an intensive energy transition, progressively replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy sources.

**JB: ORLEN is undoubtedly a major player in the European refining industry. Refiners like Orlen have witnessed high margins in recent years. What do you see coming for the refining industry in Europe?**

**LL Orlen stands as the largest multi-energy company in Central and Eastern Europe today.**

**AC:** THigh refining margins are the result of the exceptional market situation that has developed after the pandemic. As transportation froze and demand for fuels fell, many refineries closed worldwide. In 2021, demand for fuels grew rapidly and collided with a barrier to refinery capacity. Consequently, fuel prices had to rise strongly to reduce demand to the level of available supply. The outbreak of the war in Ukraine further exacerbated these tensions.

The scarcity of fuels on the market, resulting in high margins, is temporary as the energy transition shifts transport to low and zero-emission fuels such as electricity, biofuels, synthetic fuels, and hydrogen. Refineries have to adapt to this situation, which in practice involves a change in the production profile. Stand-alone refineries are in a difficult position. Some will be turned into biorefineries or fuel storage facilities, while others will be closed. Refineries integrated with petrochemicals, such as ours, are in a better position, as demand for petrochemical products will increase.

**JB: Recent data shows that in the past two years, Russia has ceased to be Europe's main provider of refined petroleum products, such as gasoline and diesel. Instead, there is more intra-European trade in petroleum products. Is this new economic environment an opportunity for ORLEN?**

**AC:** The war in Ukraine has made it clear to the whole of Europe that the energy transition, i.e. replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy sources, favors a shift away from Russian hydrocarbons. However, this is a process that requires considerable investment and time, and the acceleration forced by the war in the short term creates market tensions. Today, for example, we are still facing a shortage of liquid fuels in relation to demand, which is why we have increased fuel prices and higher refinery margins. One should not draw too hasty conclusions from this for the future of refining, as this is a temporary phenomenon and in the long term, refineries in Europe will be under pressure from a melting demand for fuels produced from crude oil. As there will be more refineries in the southern hemisphere, the output of these refineries will intensify competition in global fuel markets, especially in Europe.



Europe is at the forefront of restrictive climate regulation, and this is reflected in the European refining industry, which tackles both emissions from fuel production and emissions from the combustion of fuel in car engines, accounting for 80% of all fuel production. In summary, the new economic environment significantly strengthens the energy transition processes, and ORLEN, operating in many energy markets, has all the conditions to become a transition leader in the CEE region.

**JB: Now let's talk about strategy. What are some of the challenges and opportunities for ORLEN in the context of the energy transition?**

**LL ORLEN has all the conditions to become the energy transition leader in the CEE.**

**AC:** As the largest company in the CEE region, we face a highly demanding challenge. We take the processes of climate change and adaptation to the environment in which we operate very seriously. As I have already mentioned, ORLEN has declared its commitment to reducing carbon dioxide emissions to net zero by 2050. This is not a hasty declaration; behind it lies a well-thought-out strategy that requires not only considerable investment but also well-considered decisions regarding what to invest in and when. Examining the energy transition pathways in the CEE region is helpful, as they will differ from those in Western Europe primarily due to differences in wealth and access to technology. These pathways need to be updated as both market conditions and climate regulations change. They must be overlaid with a sequence of our actions, outlining a plan to convert traditional assets that are currently profitable but may not be in the future into renewable assets that are subsidized today and expected to be profitable in the future.

The Group's transformation into a multi-energy entity will be grounded in renewable and gas-fired power generation, efficient, low-carbon refining and petrochemical production, in-house hydrocarbon production, and an integrated offer for individual customers. By 2030, the ORLEN Group will have earmarked a total of PLN 140 billion for investment, actively managing its portfolio of business projects. The largest proportion of capital expenditure will be allocated to the segments that best realize the Company's strategic growth ambitions. Approximately PLN 85 billion will be allocated to new, promising areas primarily related to renewable energy and advanced petrochemistry. In turn, the Group will allocate PLN 55 billion to increase the efficiency of its current assets.

The ability to make such investments largely depends on the profits we generate, access to a range of technologies, and regulation. It turns out that overly restrictive regulations mean that some technologies are excluded from the possibility to invest or that this investment is too expensive. One example is nuclear power, which a few years ago did not fit into the framework recognized by the European Commission as a low-carbon technology. With the energy crisis and after the outbreak of war, there was a change of heart on this subject. ORLEN is very actively involved in regulatory reviews and opinions because, as an industry, we need to, and we have extensive knowledge of the subject.



**JB: ORLEN is not only the largest energy company in Poland but also in the Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) region. As a regional leader, ORLEN presented a report about CEE's energy outlook at CERAWEEK. What are the key conclusions from this report?**

**AC:** We operate in many countries in the CEE. We've observed that taking a strategic view, through the prism of the region rather than individual countries, and pursuing common strategic objectives unlocks synergies. That's why we wanted to examine what was happening in the area of transformation at the regional level rather than focusing solely on individual countries. There was a lack of such knowledge because no one had looked at the transformation from this perspective before. We decided to fill this gap.

The main conclusion of the report is that the energy transition in the region is progressing, but at a slower pace than in Germany and Austria, for example. The reason is the cost of rebuilding energy security in the new geopolitical set-up and cutting off supplies from Russia. The CEE region lies on the eastern border of the European Union, which is also the eastern flank of NATO. The war has caused the region to face a second type of transformation involving a shift of raw material supply routes from an eastern direction to a north-south direction. This consumes a lot of financial resources and slows down the green transformation. Pipelines, gas pipelines, fuel and energy storage facilities must be expanded, i.e., investment in the use of fossil fuels must be temporarily increased because, at the moment, there is no alternative to restoring energy security in the region and in Europe.

Security transformation offers potential benefits. It provides an opportunity to deepen cooperation between the countries of the region, which is essential for joint infrastructure projects that support security, energy transition, and ultimately unite the regions. Another conclusion is that there are numerous energy infrastructure installations in the Baltic Sea, including offshore wind farms, gas pipelines, oil ports, and gas ports, which require adequate protection. Additionally, there is the advantage of lowering the overall costs of maintaining this infrastructure through the cooperation of countries and sharing the costs of ensuring energy security.

**JB: What's the significance of the CEE region for us here in the United States?**

**LL We are a large market for US oil and gas.**

**AC:** The CEE region is of significant interest to the United States for several reasons. First, it is a region that lies on NATO's eastern flank, which includes some of the most active NATO members, and is now very important for the alliance's security. Second, the region is undergoing a security transition, shifting from sourcing energy resources such as oil and gas from Russia towards Western sources, mainly American ones. We are a large market for US oil and gas. Third, we are a market that is still growing, and in many countries, the power industry relies on coal, thus the demand for gas will remain strong due to the decarbonization of coal power. For this reason, we are replacing it with renewable energy sources, as well as largely US natural gas and nuclear power based on US technology.



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**JB: Can you tell us more about the energy cooperation between the United States and the CEE region?**

**AC:** Currently, the most significant area of cooperation between the CEE region and the US is undoubtedly energy security. Our region has long pursued diversification of hydrocarbon supply routes, particularly aiming to reduce dependence on gas from Russia. The involvement of US companies in both oil and LNG supply plays a crucial role in achieving this goal. Presently, our region, especially Poland, has achieved independence from gas supplies from Russia.

Another aspect of energy cooperation is nuclear energy. A revival of projects in nuclear power plants is underway in our region, with American players playing a prominent role. For instance, in Poland, the first nuclear power plant will be constructed by an American consortium utilizing American technology. As ORLEN, we closely monitor the development of SMR technology, particularly the BWRX technology being developed by the GE/Hitachi consortium.

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**JB: What are ORLEN's current activities in North America?**

**AC:** ORLEN maintains a significant presence in Canada, primarily focused on upstream activities related to shale gas extraction, although not on a large scale. Regarding our expanding presence in Texas or the US, we observe a robust trend in attracting investment, particularly in relation to IRAs. Additionally, we are exploring increased activity in VC funds, seeking to invest in the most promising startups aligned with our business model.

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**JB: CEE economies are directly exposed to recent geopolitical events caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, such as the re-configuration of crude oil and natural gas flows. Another incoming challenge is the energy transition. How does ORLEN help the CEE region navigate this new environment?**

**AC:** The diversion of oil and gas flows is a process that needs to be well-prepared in advance. This involves making substantial investments in infrastructure to create alternative supply routes. Often, when the decision is made to expand the infrastructure, the accounts show it to be unnecessary, as natural gas and oil are flowing in adequate quantities. Therefore, initially, there will be costs for an under-utilized investment. As ORLEN and PGNiG, we insisted on the construction of Naftoport, the purchase of a gas terminal, and the construction of the Baltic Pipe natural gas pipeline. We initiated these investments well in advance. Fortunately, the investments were commissioned before the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, making us independent from Russian supply and allowing us to shift towards the Baltic and Western directions without reducing the volume of supply. By constructing the Baltic Pipe and commissioning it at the right time, we have alleviated demand and price pressure in the LNG market. Naftoport supports the operation of German refineries in the north, as they were supplied through the Friendship pipeline, now via the Baltic Sea, reducing price pressure on European fuel markets. Given Europe's shortage of refining capacity, every refinery is in high demand.



As a leader of change in Central and Eastern Europe, our mission is to strengthen the energy security of the entire region. Operating as a multi-energy company with a diverse range of energy assets, we ensure continuous energy supply, bridging natural dips in renewable energy production with increased output from our gas blocks. In preparing reports on the energy transition in Europe, we not only identify areas requiring investment but also pinpoint opportunities for collaborative investment projects across Europe.

**JB: Thank you for your valuable insights. Lastly, what message would you like to convey to our readers about ORLEN's role in shaping the future of energy in the CEE?**

**AC:** As the largest player in the region, we naturally assume a leadership role. But it's not solely about our dominant market position – it's about our vision and deliberate actions. We see ourselves as pioneers, blazing trails and paving the path forward for others to follow. Our goal isn't just to lead; it's to inspire and unite the entire CEE region, addressing through innovation and cooperation common challenges, such as energy security, through innovation and cooperation.



Strong asset base

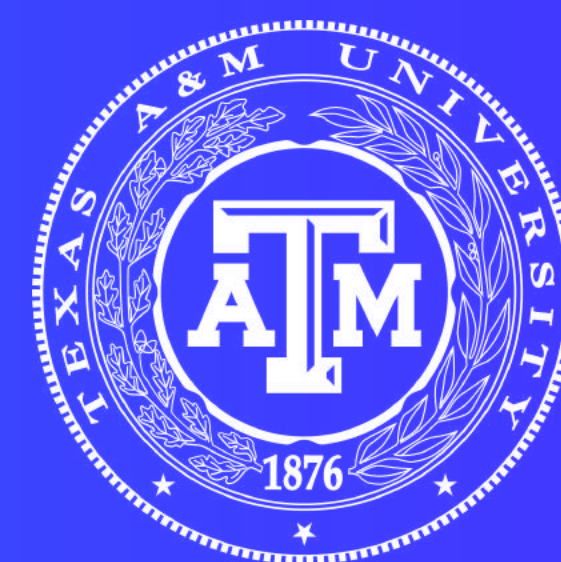








07



## Polonia Feature Interview: Dr. Jim Mazurkiewicz

*In the "Polonia Feature" section we showcase the achievements and contributions of prominent members of the Polish-Texan business community. In our debut interview, we are honored to introduce Dr. Jim Mazurkiewicz, a Texas A&M University professor who combines academic excellence with entrepreneurial acumen. Serving as a vital bridge between Texas and Poland, Dr. Mazurkiewicz fosters business cooperation between these two vibrant economies.*

**Jakub Bartoszewski (JB):** Dr. Mazurkiewicz, thank you for chatting with us today. Can you please start by telling us about your role at Texas A&M University?

**JM:** At Texas A&M University, I have the privilege of serving as the Director of the Governor Dolph Briscoe Jr. Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership Program, also known as TALL. The objective of this program is to provide leadership education to mid-career professionals in the agricultural business in Texas. We aim to create a cadre of Texas leaders to ensure effective understanding and encourage positive action on key issues relevant to the agricultural industry. Additionally, I hold the position of Full Professor within the Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications at Texas A&M University.

**LL** We aim to create a cadre of Texas leaders for the agricultural industry.



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**JB: Thank you for that introduction. How did your career at Texas A&M University progress to include oversight of the Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership Program?**

**JM:** My journey within the Texas A&M University System spans 46 years, starting as an agricultural representative in several Texas counties before transitioning into my current role as Professor and Director of the Leadership Unit within the Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communication. Throughout my tenure, I've overseen various leadership programs, including the Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership Program for mid-career agriculture professionals, along with other initiatives such as the San Antonio Livestock Exposition Leadership Program and the Poland-TALL Emerging Leaders Program for Texas A&M University students.

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**JB: That's very impressive. So, I see that the TALL program has a Polish connection. Do you have a personal link to Poland?**

**JM:** My connection to Poland stems from my Polish heritage. I am a proud fifth-generation Polish-Texan. My ancestors immigrated from Prussian-occupied Poland to Texas in the 1880s. On my paternal side, my great-great-grandparents hailed from the villages of Węglewo and Sławno, situated between Poznań and Gniezno, not far from the castle of Poland's first ruler, Mieszko I. On my maternal side, my great-great-grandparents also arrived in Texas around the same time, originating from Radzyń Chełmiński near Toruń and Jacewo near Inowrocław. We still speak the 19th-century Wielkoposka dialect in my family, preserving it unchanged for 145 years.

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**JB: 145 years... That's a long time. So, do you understand modern Polish?**

**JM:** Yeah, I understand most of it. But the Polish language that I speak is more like that of a 19th-century Polish farmer! These days, you can probably only find it in books. A few years ago, a group of linguistic researchers from Poland came to Texas to record a sample of that speech from me and my family.

**JB: Wow.**

**JM:** They were very surprised as well!

**“ My ancestors immigrated to Texas in the 1880s. We still speak 19th century Polish, preserving it unchanged for 145 years. ”**



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**JB: Tell us please, what motivated you to become involved in fostering business ties between Texas and Poland?**

**JM:** Well, having done 46 years of public service, I've always found joy in helping others succeed; it's just part of who I am. And with Poland being my ancestral home, I take pride in lending a hand when needed. Through my connections in both Texas and Poland, I've been able to link up key players, open doors, and create opportunities that benefit both sides. As Poland emerges as a new economic powerhouse in the European Union, Texas continues to thrive as one of the foremost economies in the United States. There are natural synergies between Poland and Texas as business partners, and our similar attitudes and outlooks only enhance that.

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**JB: What Polish-Texan business initiatives that you have participated in are you particularly proud of?**

**JM:** I'd say it was facilitating the LNG deal between Texas and Poland. I helped in initiating contact between the Texas Governor's Office and the Polish Ministry of Energy to secure the first contract of LNG from Cheniere Energy in Texas in 2017. This initiative resulted in Texas becoming Poland's main source of LNG, helping it to diversify its energy supply before it became necessary. I take great pride in this initiative because it not only increased the energy security of Poland, but also contributed to the broader energy security of the West, which became evident in the aftermath of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

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**JB: That's big. Anything else?**

**JM:** Well, I am also very proud of introducing HEB, the #1 ranked grocer in the US, to Polish food producers. As of 2022, HEB purchases approximately \$50 million worth of food products from Poland. Furthermore, I find joy in organizing various exchange programs between Poland and Texas, involving participants from business, government, academia, and students. For example, recently, I had the opportunity to host a group of Polish high school students from Toruń. I truly believe that fostering such personal connections is just as crucial for building strong Polish-Texan relations as all the big business deals.

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**JB: Thanks for sharing that. What Polish-Texan business initiatives have been keeping you busy recently?**

**JM:** Recently, I hosted two Polish agribusiness companies, SaMASZ and MAZURI World Company, seeking partnerships to enter the Texas market. They specialize in farming equipment. Additionally, I organized a two-week visit for 26 Polish agriculture professionals to explore Texas agriculture from Amarillo to Houston. Following that, I welcomed the 20 Polish high school students and their teachers from Stefan Banach High School in Toruń, as mentioned earlier.



I also hosted Igor Janke, a Polish journalist, assisting him in establishing the Three Seas Leadership Institute, a think tank with an executive education program aiming to become a prominent institution in Central Europe, bridging with the USA. This institute will serve as a think tank and elite school, facilitating interactions with influential leaders. A very interesting project overall. Currently, I'm collaborating with the Polish Institute of National Remembrance to organize a conference in Warsaw celebrating the 35th anniversary of Poland's first democratic election, scheduled for June 5th, 2024. Notably, U.S. Ambassador to Poland Mark Brzezinski and former US Ambassador to Poland John R. Davis Jr. have confirmed their participation, alongside several former Solidarity leaders. I've been invited to speak there on behalf of Texas A&M University and Texas Polonia, including our PolChamTX.

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**JB: That's a lot! So, in your opinion, what synergies exist between Texas and Poland?**

**JM:** Currently, the most obvious business synergies between Texas and Poland are in the energy sector, especially regarding LNG contracts, agriculture, IT and defense. The EU, and particularly Poland, have recently recognized the business opportunities in Texas. With our \$2.4 trillion GDP, we rank as the 8th largest economy in the world, surpassing Russia, Canada, Italy, and many others. It's a massive market and serves as an excellent entry point into the US market for European companies, arguably much better than other states. Why? We are very business-friendly here. Texas boasts the most Fortune 500 headquarters and has been rated the best-in-nation for business climate and job growth for 19 consecutive years! We are centrally located, have excellent infrastructure, minimal regulation, no corporate tax, and lower costs compared to elsewhere in the US. Additionally, we offer cheap energy, a large and qualified workforce, a substantial internal market, and a healthy mix of agriculture, industry, and services. The Texas Triangle region deserves special attention, consisting of Houston, the energy and medical capital of the world, as well as home to the largest port in the US and NASA; Austin, the burgeoning tech hub and the likely successor of Silicon Valley; and Dallas, the financial capital of the South.

On the other hand, Poland is emerging as the rising economic leader of Europe. The Polish economy has experienced incessant growth for the past three decades, while many of its European peers stagnated. It has maintained an average GDP growth rate of 5% per year since the fall of the Berlin Wall, even through the economic downturn of 2008! The country now boasts a vibrant and relatively large economy with excellent infrastructure, transparent institutions, low costs, a business-friendly environment, and a highly skilled workforce known for its hard work and entrepreneurial spirit. Importantly, Polish society is very pro-American, possibly the most pro-American in Europe. This is significant as it fosters a good environment for doing business. Given that, it's unsurprising that many US giants, such as Google, Microsoft, and Amazon, have already made significant investments in the Polish economy. I believe that Poland is indeed an excellent entry point for American companies planning to expand into the European market. In fact, this is not just my sales pitch – Poland consistently ranks in the top 5 European countries for foreign direct investment. On a side note, I anticipate that in the future, Poland will lead efforts to integrate the Central Eastern Europe region, which is poised to be the fastest-growing part of the European Union. Every American company seeking growth opportunities in Europe should keep that in mind.



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**JB: What strategies could be implemented to enhance Polish-Texan cooperation?**

**JM:** I believe that the highest priority right now is to establish a direct flight from Houston to Warsaw. Currently, the journey takes around 22 hours door-to-door, involving at least two flights in each direction. While we can generate the best ideas for business cooperation, for many people, this may be a deal-breaker. However, it doesn't have to be this way. The flight from Houston to Amsterdam takes approximately 9 hours, so the journey to Warsaw should take no more than 10 hours. I strongly believe that this is an issue the Polish government should seriously consider. Face-to-face contacts are crucial in business, and making them more frequent will only strengthen the ties between Texas and Poland.

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**JB: What advice would you offer to American businesses seeking to expand into the Polish market and vice versa?**

**JM:** My advice is to go and begin relationships with people within your field of interest and learn for yourself what opportunities are available and what ideas have yet to be discovered. There is no substitute for face-to-face meetings! Body language accounts for 87% of the message, and in-person meetings are second to none in building strong relationships. So... we really need that direct flight connection!

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**JB: Lastly, what message would you like to convey to readers about the importance of partnership between Texas and Poland?**

**JM:** Poland and Texas have a history of cooperation spanning over 200 years, and both are strategically located on their respective continents, sharing similar conservative, independent, and hard-working values that have instilled pride and strong patriotism in both Texas and Poland. The opportunities for cooperation between Texas and Poland are vast. We are just scratching the surface now, with a great future awaiting for both. We need to seize the moment, and the rest will follow!









08

## Rzeczpospolita Feature Interview: Dr. Urszula Czuba

*Rzeczpospolita* is the Polish word for "republic," a direct translation from the Latin phrase "res publica." In this section, we feature interviews with representatives of the Republic of Poland active in Texas. We're introducing Dr. Urszula Czuba, the Polish Ministry of Digital Affairs envoy to Austin, who is working on increasing Polish-Texan business cooperation in the IT sector.

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**Jakub Bartoszewski (JB):** Thank you for finding the time to speak with us today. Dr Czuba, can you tell us please what is your mission in Texas?

**Dr. Urszula Czuba (UC):** My mission in Texas is to enhance the Polish tech sector by connecting Polish entrepreneurs with the American tech ecosystem, focusing on securing investments, forming strategic partnerships, and facilitating knowledge exchange. Working with the Polish Investment and Trade Agency and the Ministry of Digital Affairs, we aim to accelerate the growth of Polish businesses through insightful market analysis and networking opportunities. Our goal is to drive industry development and expand the global reach of Polish talent, fostering a mutually beneficial relationship between Polish entrepreneurs and the American tech sector.

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**JB:** Is there already cooperation between Poland and the United States in technology and innovation?

**UC:** Poland and the United States share common goals in technology and innovation, leading to a multifaceted partnership that has developed over the years. This collaboration encompasses various aspects, including bilateral agreements, business partnerships, educational collaborations, investment in startups, and government initiatives. For instance, a great example of this is our membership in The Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI), our presence at the Consumer Electronics Show organized by the Consumer Technology Association, or our growing presence at South by Southwest (SXSW), a cluster of parallel film, interactive media, and music festivals in Austin, Texas, United States.



**JB: What opportunities does Poland present for American tech companies?**

**UC:** Poland presents a compelling opportunity for American tech companies, supported by a solid growth trajectory and a supportive environment. The European Commission has upheld its economic growth forecast for Poland at 3.2% for 2025, highlighting its financial resilience. Contributing 8–9% to its GDP, the IT sector in Poland is a significant part of the economy. Poland is also celebrated for its highly skilled workforce, rendering it a prime location for tech companies looking for exceptional talent. The excellent talent pool in Poland is evidenced by up to 60,000 tech companies, including ten unicorns, underscoring the innovative and entrepreneurial spirit of the Polish tech landscape. Positioned strategically in the heart of Europe, Poland provides logistical advantages for businesses aiming at both EU and non-EU markets. This strategic location, combined with the establishment of operations by major corporations such as Google, Samsung, Facebook, Amazon, and Intel, attests to Poland's growing importance as a tech hub. Additionally, the Polish government offers considerable support, with projections indicating continued growth in the IT market, thereby enhancing its appeal for foreign investment.

**JB: Why would an American company choose Poland over another EU country, perhaps one in Western Europe?**

**LL Poland presents a compelling opportunity for American tech companies.**

**UC:** Poland stands out primarily due to its highly skilled workforce, multilingual and well-versed in the IT sector. Choosing Poland over other EU countries, especially those in Western Europe, presents clear benefits for businesses, especially those from the US looking to establish a strong presence in Europe. This combination makes it easier for American companies to communicate and operate effectively. Furthermore, Poland's IT sector is rapidly growing, showing a strong demand for American technology products and solutions. The market has an appetite for innovation and a readiness to embrace the latest trends. This environment, coupled with a cost-effective operating landscape, positions Poland as a prime location for fostering innovation and business expansion in the heart of Europe.

**JB: What are the main goals you hope to achieve in fostering technology cooperation between Poland and the US?**

**UC:** Our primary goals in fostering technology cooperation between Poland and the United States focus on supporting Polish entrepreneurs in the digital and new technologies sector. We aim to facilitate their entry and growth in the market through strategic development, organizing industry events, and enhancing entrepreneurial education. Building a robust network of contacts and actively promoting Polish technological innovations are key. Additionally, we're committed to monitoring market trends and regulations to ensure our strategies align with current conditions. Through these efforts, we strive to create a strong partnership that leverages the technological strengths of both countries, driving innovation and economic growth.



**JB:** Can you please elaborate on the specific initiatives you oversee?

**UC:** In 2023/24, we're taking significant strides to amplify Poland's footprint in the global tech scene and foster deeper collaboration with the US. Our strategy includes showcasing Polish innovation at premier tech events like CES, SXSW, GDP, Fintech Week, Money 20/20, and TechCrunch Disrupt. These platforms offer Polish tech firms a golden opportunity to present their breakthroughs, engage with global tech leaders, and immerse themselves in the latest industry trends.

Another groundbreaking initiative we're particularly keen on is the establishment of a Polish ICT Cluster in Austin. This endeavor will foster a community where Polish companies can collaborate on larger-scale projects, share valuable insights, and collectively position Poland as a leading force in the ICT domain. Through scrum meetups and market review podcasts/webinars, we're equipping businesses with the tools they need to navigate the market successfully.

To keep the momentum going and ensure our community stays updated with the latest from these events, we invite you to follow PAIH - ZBH Houston posts on LinkedIn during SXSW. Stay tuned for exclusive insights, highlights, and more from one of the tech industry's most anticipated gatherings. Join us on this exciting journey & let's make 2024 a landmark year for Polish technology on the global stage!

**JB:** Are there any upcoming events in the next few months promoting technology cooperation between Poland and the US?

**LL** *Our strategy includes showcasing Polish innovation at premier tech events.*

**UC:** Absolutely! For instance, this summer, we're thrilled to facilitate two American delegations to Poland for premier events, including the Wolves Summit, the CyberSec Forum, and, with high hopes, the Women in Tech Summit, all scheduled for May and June 2024. These gatherings aim to illuminate Poland's dynamic tech ecosystem, fostering invaluable knowledge exchange and laying the groundwork for future investments. At the same time, we're actively liaising with Polish technology hubs, business special zones, and other pivotal entities to showcase their potential as formidable partners on the global stage during those events. This concerted effort underlines our commitment to propelling Poland-US technology cooperation to new heights, promising a season of groundbreaking opportunities and partnerships.



**JB: How do you foresee the future of Poland's high-tech industry, especially in terms of international cooperation and innovation?**

**UC:** Poland aims to position itself as a leading tech hub in Europe, supported by its skilled workforce and strong government support. The country focuses on areas like artificial intelligence (AI) and cybersecurity for growth. Poland is also working on strategic partnerships, particularly with the US, and plans to increase its research and development (R&D) spending to 1.7% of GDP by 2025. With a thriving startup scene boasting over 60,000 tech companies, Poland is creating an environment ripe for international cooperation and innovation. These efforts make Poland an attractive center for global tech collaborations, leveraging its innovative landscape and deep talent pool to drive technological advancements.

**JB: I see that you have a STEM PhD. How does your background help foster Polish-American cooperation in technology?**

**Poland aims to position itself as a leading tech hub in Europe.**

**UC:** My PhD project was supported by the M-ERA.NET consortium, which partnered with 37 organizations across 25 European countries and the Luxembourg National Research Fund. My research success hinged on teamwork with key institutions like the Luxembourg Institute of Science and Technology, the European Commission's Joint Research Center in Ispra, Italy, the University of Liege in Belgium, and industry partners. This broad initiative taught me how to handle complex projects that span multiple disciplines and countries and made me adept at finding innovative solutions and fostering collaboration.

Most importantly, I've learned to connect different tech ecosystems, making complicated concepts work for joint projects. This skill is crucial for creating partnerships that benefit both the US and Poland, using science to address real-world challenges. My background in academia and industry helps me share best practices and promote growth in the tech sector. With this combination of skills, I'm ready to support the digital advancement of both nations.

**JB: Does this cooperation extend to scientific exchange within academia?**

**UC:** In the era before AI, research knowledge typically needed updating within five years. With AI's rapid advancement, this obsolescence timeline has significantly shortened. This shift underscores the critical need for companies to maintain close collaborations with academia to stay current. Direct engagement with academic research ensures access to the latest innovations and findings, which are crucial for staying competitive in a fast-moving technological landscape.





Prioritizing unbiased research within these collaborations is essential to ensure that companies adapt to new developments and maintain relevance. This approach is beneficial and necessary for companies aiming to effectively navigate the accelerated pace of change. For a deeper understanding of the current state of collaboration between industry and academia, especially within the American and Polish markets, I recommend looking into reports like those created by The American Chamber of Commerce in Poland and KPMG in recent years.

**JB: From your perspective, what are the primary challenges in further strengthening the partnership between Poland and the US in the IT sector?**

**UC:** Strengthening the Polish-American IT sector partnership faces challenges such as aligning regulatory frameworks, navigating differences in business cultures, protecting intellectual property during technology transfers, and addressing talent mobility due to visa constraints. Additional challenges stem from securing investment and ensuring technology compatibility across borders. Addressing these requires collaborative efforts to simplify legal processes, foster cultural understanding, and create supportive policies for talent exchange and joint innovation initiatives. Despite these challenges, both countries are dedicated to innovation and recognize the rapid changes in the tech industry. This dedication gives hope for a better future. By working together, the US and Poland can leverage their strengths to improve technology and grow both economies.

**JB: As Texas rises as a tech powerhouse, what lessons can Poland draw to excel in technology and innovation?**

**UC:** The US market holds significant interest for Polish tech entrepreneurs and governing bodies. Texas, in particular, has demonstrated the success of its regulatory approach in recent years, serving as an exemplary model for those aiming to thrive in the technology and innovation ecosystem. Firstly, we should uphold the importance of creating a conducive environment for startups and tech companies. Texas exemplifies this with its supportive policies and incentives tailored to foster business development and innovation. Such an approach is critical in nurturing a vibrant ecosystem where technology firms can flourish. Secondly, the role of education and training in building a skilled workforce, especially in STEM fields, is foundational to the growth of the tech industry. Investment in these areas ensures a continuous talent supply that drives innovation and sustains the industry's expansion.

Lastly, fostering collaboration among academia, industry, and government and facilitating international partnerships is vital for technological advancements and innovation. Such synergies enhance the development of new technologies and ensure their practical application and global competitiveness. By integrating these strategies – nurturing a supportive business environment, investing in education and training, and promoting collaboration – Poland can significantly enhance its stature as a leading tech hub in Europe and on the global stage.



09



## Young Professional Feature Interview: Timothy Magier

*Introducing our first edition of the "Young Professional Feature", where we highlight the careers of young professionals of Polish origin working in Texas. In this debut interview, we chat with Timothy Magier, a Houston-based investment banker specializing in energy markets. Join us as we explore Timothy's journey, insights, and experiences.*

**Jakub Bartoszewski (JB):** Let's start with some basics. What do you do professionally and what is your background?

**Tim Magier (TM):** I am a Senior Manager on the Corporate Development team at Halliburton, helping lead our global Mergers & Acquisitions (M&A) processes and integration of targets for Halliburton's business lines. Prior to this role, I was an Energy Investment Banker at Citigroup, supporting M&A and Capital Markets transactions for clients across the energy space. I joined that team after working in Citigroup's Hedge Fund Credit Risk department, in New York, New York. Before that, I was an Investment Banking Analyst at Davenport & Company in Richmond, Virginia.

Born and raised in New Jersey, I graduated from Kenyon College with a Bachelor's degree in Economics and Psychology. There, I competed on the Men's Swim Team for all four years. I originally came to Texas in 2021, living in Austin before moving to Houston in August 2022 to join Citigroup's Energy Investment Banking team.

**JB:** Thanks for sharing that. What inspired you to choose a career path in energy investment banking?

**TM:** I am passionate about the energy sector: it is ripe with evolving technology, has high potential for innovation, and drives global economic growth and sustainability. Furthermore, M&A activities are crucial in shaping the energy landscape. Thus, my involvement in M&A allows me to contribute to the growth, efficiency, and strategic direction of energy companies, as well as broader industry trends, such as renewable energy transition, market consolidation, and geopolitical shifts. As an energy investment banker, I have an opportunity to not only observe, but also to participate in all of these trends. Working in M&A within the energy sector also offers ample opportunities for ongoing learning, including gaining exposure to various energy sub-sectors, refining negotiation and strategic planning abilities, and navigating complex regulatory landscapes.



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**JB: That sounds really interesting. So, what is your long-term goal?**

**TM:** To become an industry-leader in the energy sector and eventually start my own investment firm.

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**JB: So, what drew you to build your career in the Lone Star State?**

**TM:** Texas, particularly Houston, offers a unique blend of resources that provide an exceptional career platform. With its thriving economy, low cost of living coupled with high quality of life, and unparalleled opportunities in the energy sector, Houston is an ideal environment for professional growth. Additionally, the City provides abundant networking opportunities and avenues for professional development. Adding to its appeal, Houston has the most diverse and vibrant food scene in the country.

**LL** *Texas, particularly Houston, offers a unique blend of resources that provide an exceptional career platform.*

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**JB: Now, shifting gears a bit, could you tell us about your ties to Poland?**

**TM:** Though I was born in New Jersey, both of my parents are from Poland. They were born and raised in and near Lublin. I am fluent in Polish and visited the country countless times during my life. I love Polish culture, people, history, and of course the cuisine.

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**JB: Are there many other young professionals with Polish roots here in Houston?**

**TM:** Not many currently; however, it is a tightly knit group and it's membership grows each year.

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**JB: Now let's talk macro. Poland's robust growth in the past three decades is often described as Europe's most recent economic miracle. Does the Polish economy offer any opportunities for your industry?**

**TM:** Absolutely. The Polish government has set ambitious targets for increasing the share of renewable energy in the country's energy mix. There are opportunities for companies specializing in renewable energy technologies, project development, and financing to participate in this transition. There is also a need for modernization and upgrades of the energy infrastructure in Poland to improve efficiency, reliability, and sustainability. Opportunities exist for companies offering energy efficiency solutions, smart grid technologies, and infrastructure development services. Poland is also investing in the development of its natural gas infrastructure and diversification of its sources of gas supply.



There are opportunities for companies involved in natural gas exploration, production, transportation, and distribution to participate in this market. Poland is open to foreign investment and collaboration in the energy sector, which opens the door for international companies to partner with Polish firms, participate in joint ventures, and invest in energy projects in the country.

**JB: Are there any specific industries in Poland that you think Texas businesses should be paying more attention to?**

**TM:** Yes, I think that the Polish energy and agriculture industries provide many opportunities for economic partnership with Texan businesses. However, these are not the only industries with potential synergies as entrepreneurship across all industries in Poland provides a wide array of opportunities.

**JB: What initiatives do you think could further strengthen the economic ties between Texas and Poland?**

**TM:** To strengthen economic ties between Texas and Poland, we should encourage bilateral trade and investment, offering incentives for joint ventures and collaborative projects. Facilitating technology transfers and fostering knowledge-sharing initiatives between Texan and Polish businesses in sectors of mutual interest is crucial. Moreover, promoting academic exchanges, research collaborations, and student mobility programs between research institutions and universities in both regions can drive innovation and growth. Supporting language learning programs and cultural initiatives can deepen understanding, while enhancing diplomatic cooperation through high-level visits and joint initiatives on global issues will solidify the relationship.

**JB: In your opinion, how can Polish companies increase their visibility in Texas?**

**Polish energy and agriculture industries provide many opportunities for economic partnership with Texan businesses.**

**TM:** Polish companies can enhance their visibility in Texas through various strategies aimed at building relationships and expanding their presence. These may include active participation in trade shows and conferences, engagement with business networking groups and chambers of commerce, strategic media outreach and public relations efforts, conducting investor relations activities and roadshows, as well as establishing connections with government relations and economic development agencies.

**JB: So, to conclude, what do you like to do in your free time?**

**TM:** My favorite pastimes include traveling, staying active, exploring Houston's diverse food scene, and supporting local community and charity organizations.



