**DREMA, Furnica, Sofab 2019 - we have our finger on the pulse [summary]**

**After four intensive days, DREMA, Furnica and Sofab 2019 came to an end. Despite unfavourable circumstances, we managed to organize an exhibition at a world-class level, which proved that the woodworking and furniture industries in Poland are doing well thanks to its scale and diversity!**

Nearly 600 exhibitors presented their flagship offerings in the heart of Wielkopolska (DREMA: 490 exhibitors - 400 from Poland and 90 from abroad; Furnica and Sofab: 95 exhibitors - 57 from Poland and 38 from abroad). Impressive stands occupied a total of 28,700 m2 (DREMA - 25,000 m2, Furnica and Sofab - 3,700 m2 of exhibition space). The exhibition of modern machines, specialist equipment and tools attracted 15,450 professional visitors to Poznań.

DREMA, Furnica, Sofab 2019, held from 10 to 13 September this year, offered the opportunity to follow the latest trends in the furniture and woodworking industries. Visitors explored the potential of modern solutions and deepened their knowledge through a wide range of complementary events. It was worth looking for twenty products awarded with the prestigious MTP Gold Medal, 16 creative stands awarded with the Acanthus Aureus distinctions and several dozen new products on the market.

**Three factories live**

An advantage of DREMA, Furnica and Sofab is the possibility to see machinery in action. In addition to individual stands of the exhibitors, this opportunity was provided by three special spaces, which for the duration of the fair got turned into demonstration factories, where modern technologies, solutions and woodworking machines were presented. The projects Drema for Kids, Innovative Kitchen and Upholstery Workshop 4.0 were also educational and allowed visitors to familiarize themselves with the technological side of the furniture production process.

As part of the Global Innovation in Kitchen zone, InfoTEC CNC together with its partners (Abrys System, Blum, Frontres, ICA, ITA Tools, Kronospan, Lamello, Schilsner, Drew-Met) demonstrated a comprehensive, global process of designing and manufacturing tailor-made furniture. Everyone interested had a chance to learn how the omnipresent digitization affects the production processes of furniture and what opportunities it creates for the development and increase of sales. They also learned about the direction of changes in design and the importance of ergonomics when designing kitchens. They also had the opportunity to gain knowledge about the ways of selecting decors, furniture board structures, veneers and their alternative applications.

In comparison, Upholstery Workshop 4.0 is a zone with ready-made, modern and automated solutions for the creation of upholstered furniture. In addition to InfoTEC CNC - the company coordinating the factory, the zone also featured products of such companies as Allcomp, Amatec, ITA Tools, Kronospan, PUREKO, Ramaro, TopSolution and Woodinspector.

The Drema for Kids event was an opportunity to observe the process of making children's furniture from design to final products. Polish companies affiliated with the DROMA Association of Manufacturers of Woodworking Machinery, Devices and Tools were involved in the event. It is worth noting that all furniture and accessories produced as part of the Drema for Kids action are donated for charity purposes to the needy orphanages or the Foundation.

**Two major congresses**

What would an exhibition be like without opportunities for participants to expand their knowledge and answers to many questions concerning the wood and furniture industry?

The second day of DREMA, FURNICA and SOFAB saw the 4th National Furniture Congress “Polish Furniture - Competitive Poland” organized by the Polish Chamber of Commerce of Furniture Manufacturers. The meeting focused on prospective markets, which are an opportunity for further dynamic development of the Polish furniture industry. One of the participants of the congress was Jadwiga Emilewicz. “This is an important sector of our economy and that is why it was included by Prime Minister Morawiecki in the Strategy for Responsible Development. Today, Polish furniture is already considered to be of good design, quality and competitive in terms of price. Still, if we want ‘made in Poland’ furniture to have high margins, it must be a recognizable brand all over the world. Automation and robotization are the future of the industry - we need to increase productivity and build modern machine parks. The challenge faced by furniture manufacturers is still the labor market and the shortage of workers,” said the Minister of Entrepreneurship and Technology.

On the other hand, one day before the start of the September block of the trade shows, the Koopdrew Congress was organized on behalf of the Polish Chamber of Commerce of Wood Industry. The congress was devoted to the use of wood as a modern, ecological and safe construction material. Currently, in many parts of the world we are observing a growing use of timber in construction. In Poland we are just beginning the development of this type of construction, we have started the government program called Polish Wooden Houses. There is still much to learn to reach the same level as in Scandinavian countries. How can we achieve this? This was the question addressed to experts from domestic and foreign organizations and institutions related to wood processing.

Both congresses were attended by many participants who were interested in listening to the speakers.

**Women power**

The event called “Women in the furniture industry - Be an inspiration that changes the world” was organized by the Polish Chamber of Commerce of Furniture Manufacturers in cooperation with the MTP Group. The meeting aimed at integrating women working in the furniture and wood industries, was attended by several dozen women. During the conversation “Your energy can drive the whole world”, Maria Wegner from SWISS Krono shared her vast professional experience of working in the typically male industry. In addition, in the discussion on #womenpower, Danuta Pawlik from Schattdecor Poland, Sylwia Oleńska from the Faculty of Wood Technology at the Warsaw University of Life Sciences and Anna Dzierżanowska from Kuchnie Halupczok presented many valuable observations stemming from their work experiences in the sectors dominated by men. “This is the first, but certainly not the last such initiative that will integrate women working in the furniture and wood industry. It is necessary to challenge stereotypes that are still present in our culture. Women do not lack the skills necessary to work in the so-called ‘male sectors’. Women have the potential to drive the development of the entire sector. That is why we are taking actions aimed at supporting and facilitating the career development of women in the woodworking and furniture industry,” summed up Aleksandra Pawlina-Janyga, who hosted the meeting.

**Known and respected**

This year's trade fair featured a number of events such as the popular Drema Design zone, stimulating Drema Tools, exciting Polish Championships in Nail Hammering, Varnishing Skills Testing Ground, Conjured from Wood, Parquet Workshops, Knowledge Zone, and a brand new addition - Wooden House Zone. It is worth noting that many web developers - bloggers, vloggers and carpentry enthusiasts who share their skills through social media (Facebook, Instagram, Youtube) - took part in the event. DREMA, Furnica and Sofab 2019 trade shows were a great opportunity to admire the following: Lidka and Jarek from the Dom i Drewno portal, who organized a two-day live mobile studio. Every day saw demonstrations at the Felder's stand, where Sławek and Meble Twojego Pomysłu could be seen. Additionally, the AMK Agency's exhibition hosted Przemek from Kępa Marzeń. The Drewno.pl portal organized the first large-scale meeting of digital woodworking enthusiasts and the event Magic of Wood welcomed the following: Alicja Solarska - Alicja w Krainie Drewna, Aneta Bukowska - Starych Mebli Czar, Helena Lipińska and Agnieszka Baraniok-Lipińska - Helena Majsterkuje, Adrian Hak - HK, Jacek Boborycki and Roman Szosler - Milion Pomysłów na Minutę, Filip Stanowski - Galeria Sztuki Stara Praga & Pracownia Mebli Dawnych, Łukasz Giergasz - Stolarnia 5m2, Maciej Kupś and Waldemar Sokalski - Rob in Wood, Mariusz Lipniacki, Mariusz Siwy - Gizmo Garaż, Mateusz Ignacak - Młody Stolarz, Mateusz Wudecki, Paweł Żurowski - Pan Fleks, Rafał Olearczuk - Olo76, Robert Wyskiel, Tomasz Magaj.

**Join us next year!**

“The woodworking and furniture industries are undergoing constant transformation and are faced with considerable challenges. Over the last few years, not only have the principles of production, but also customer expectations changed. The sector is also threatened by depleting resources of raw materials as well as staff shortages. Can innovations be a response to the challenges of the modern market? Yes, if they allow to save materials, use sustainable production and produce tailor-made furniture for demanding customers. The participants of the DREMA, Furnica and Sofab 2019 block of the trade shows could see it for themselves. This year, Poznań featured a comprehensive range of products for the wood and furniture industry - from raw materials, materials and components to pioneering machines and equipment for furniture production,” highlighted Andrzej Półrolniczak, the project manager. And what will the future of the woodworking and furniture industries look like? This issue will be discussed during the next edition of the fair, which I warmly invite you to visit. It is also worth visiting the DremaSilesia trade fair in Sosnowiec (17-19 April 2020).

**The next edition of DREMA, Furnica and Sofab block of trade shows will be held 15-18 September 2020 at the Poznań International Fair.**

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