

# Green District Conference

The Green District conference, the fifth in The Warsaw Voice's Innovative Poland series, was held March 4, focusing on new environmental protection responsibilities imposed on Polish districts under EU directives and the new law on cleanliness and order in districts.

■ The first part of the conference dealt with sustainable construction. Prof. Krzysztof Żmijewski, an expert on strategic management and infrastructure, told local government officials that low-energy and passive buildings were a good way to curb carbon dioxide emissions. Poland has adopted an EU directive under which after 2018, all public administration buildings will have to have "almost zero" energy consumption.

The most heated topic of debate at the conference was the new law on cleanliness and order in districts. Under this law, district authorities are responsible for waste management, segregation and recycling. Problems resulting from the regulations stirred a lively debate during a panel discussion with officials from the largest waste management companies in Poland. Michał Dąbrowski, the chairman of the board at Remondis Sanitech Poznań, said that each district in Poland should be approached individually. "Each district is different," Dąbrowski said. "Each has a different population and is in a different situation and so it is the job of companies like ours, with the appropriate experience and know-how, to team up with the authorities of every district

and work out individual systems to manage, segregate and recycle waste and reduce the amount of it."

The conference closed with a session on finances aiming to advise districts on how they can obtain funds for green projects. Małgorzata Skucha, head of the National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management, presented a wide range of programs designed to support environmentally friendly projects undertaken by districts. Apart from using subsidies from the National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management, Polish districts have been seeking funds for new projects by issuing municipal bonds. Some have also started public-private partnerships projects. Władysław Dariusz Łokietek, mayor of the town of Karczew, told the conference about a contract between Karczew and the Siemens company for the thermal modernization of 10 buildings, including schools, preschools and a health center. This is the first contract of its kind in Mazovia province. Public-private partnerships as a funding option are gaining supporters, but local government officials at the conference emphasized that such projects require quality legal assistance.

The Green District conference was attended by 250 local government officials from large cities and small rural districts alike. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everybody for their presence and contribution to the debate. If you are interested in sustainable development and new green technology in commercial real estate projects, we strongly encourage you to take part in our next Innovative Poland conference May 16, entitled Sustainable Office Buildings.

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