

Another Europoltech

#Strategia i polityka 15 kwietnia 2015

Europoltech 2015, the 5th International Fair of Technology and Equipment for the Police and National Security Services begins. Once again it takes place in the building of the Expo XXI Warsaw Convention and Exhibition Centre. The show is accompanied by the 7th International Police Conference Protection of the Financial Interests of the Polish Republic and the European Union. Like two years ago, approx. 150 exhibitors have announced their participation. Several thousand visitors are expected.



Europoltech is traditionally held in the building of the Expo XXI Warsaw Convention and Exhibition Centre / Photo: Rafał Janicki

This year's event will be comparable to that of 2013. This confirms the Europoltech reputation as the most important event for law enforcement services, including the Police, Border Guard and Military Police, not only in Poland, but throughout Central and Eastern Europe. It is also a fact, however, that its further development will depend on the funds that these services will have available in the next few years to purchase equipment and services.

The current crisis in Ukraine shows the need to increase the level of Poland's security. In a natural way the attention of the media and public focuses on the military. However, national security also has an internal dimension, and the events in the Crimea and Donbas indicate that the decomposition of forces reporting to the Ministry of Internal Affairs was a first sign of weakness of the state. Nobody paid attention to the fact that in any strong country the *green men* would first be dealt with by special rapid response police forces rather than the army.

So maybe it is high time to take care of equipping the police and other departments as well. Only the replacement of the ageing vehicles would require a few hundred million

zlotys... If we add to this the communications equipment, modern firearms and aerial vehicles, it turns out that the potential capital expenditure estimates of the Ministry of Internal Affairs must be very comprehensive.

It seems that there is no alternative for such a scenario. In the long run, the constantly increasing MoD spending will need to be reflected in the growth of the budgets of the other uniformed services. This in turn, will generate the interest of potential suppliers. Data from 2007-2011 prove that even now these are no small amounts. During that period Polish Police has spent 1.3 billion zlotys for the purchase of weapons, transport, communications, IT, uniforms and special equipment. Along with the Border Guard, the State Fire Service and the Government Protection Bureau, this figure rose to 2.7 billion zlotys, which gives an average of almost 600 million per year.

This means that the business environment of Europoltech is going to improve every two years. The question remains when the major shift takes place and whether it is going to be an evolutionary, or a revolutionary one. Answers to these questions will only come in the future. It is certain, however, that the Warsaw event invariably attracts all the major suppliers for the uniformed services, from the largest (including manufacturers of small arms, uniforms and personal equipment), through suppliers of opto-electronic systems, inspection-mine disposal robots, communications and information exchange systems, patrol cars, to developers of specialized software and cryptographic solutions. Traditionally, there are numerous exhibits by companies offering light and sound systems for police cars, but also, a recent novelty, stands with unmanned aerial vehicles, including mini-helicopters.

An important part of the exhibition is occupied by institutions responsible for the security of citizens: the Police, Border Guard, Customs Service, Military Police, Chief Inspectorate of Road Transport, Central Anti-corruption Bureau and State Fire Service. Similar to *Europoltech 2013*, participation of numerous government officials can be expected during this year's show.