



“NOWINY” Anew

If the man in the street is asked: where is “Nowiny” Cement Plant located, then most certainly he will answer that it is nearby Kielce. Whereas if we ask about Dyckerhoff Polska, then the answer will be: I don't know. And it is the same cement plant in Nowiny near Kielce, which, since 1996, has been a group company of Germany's Dyckerhoff, which, in turn, since 2008, has been owned by Italy's Buzzi Unicem Group, one of the leading manufacturers of construction materials in the world. We are interviewing **Mr Krzysztof Kieres, member of the Management Board, General Director**, about the company's current standing and its future.

Is Dyckerhoff Polska the same cement plant like “Nowiny” Cement Plant years ago? Does it still emit noise, dirt, pollution, being a polluter?

One may refer here to a long-standing quote and say “the same, but not exactly the same”. Indeed, Nowiny Cement Plant, currently operating under the business name of “Dyckerhoff Polska”, has been continuously located in the same place – in the town of Nowiny near Kielce and it still manufactures cement, however, it is a completely different plant. As late as in the 1980's it was listed among the 80 largest polluters in Poland and that stereotype, referring to the entire cement industry, anyhow, is persistently engrained in society. However, I wish to ensure that currently it's a very modern plant that applies the latest technological solutions, and therefore, it is environmental friendly. The best evidence of that is the fact that the protection zone around the plant that was set up in the 1960's has become an attractive location for housing investments, and residents do not bother at all to have such a “polluter” as their neighbour.

We put a lot of stress on safe and friendly working conditions. Man is the most important element of the manufacturing process, and life and health of employees are the utmost value for us.

Presently, Polish cement plants are owned by foreign groups. Was the take-over of “Nowiny” by a German group a good solution ensuring development for the company and its staff employment, or, perhaps, was it just a sell-off of the Polish business to foreign capital?

Privatisation of the cement industry carried out in the 1990's was comprehensive. All cement plants were obsolete and did not meet ecological standards prevailing at that time even. It turn out that in order to meet civilisation requirements of the 21st century, huge capital expenditures were required. All that could have been provided by investors with multi-year experience in manufacturing of cement and who were aware of ecological requirements that back then were already effective on Western markets. They could also provide capital required for such investments, which was commonly lacking in Poland during the first years of transformation. From that point of view, I positively assess privatisation conducted in such way.

Dyckerhoff Polska is not only the former “Nowiny” Cement Plant, it also means numerous production plants manufacturing ready-mixed concrete...

In the structure of Dyckerhoff Polska we have over 20 production plants manufacturing ready-mixed concrete, which are located in the southern part of Poland. Until 2007 those two business lines were operating independently, as separate business entities. It was then decided to merge those companies, achieving in that way many synergy effects, as well as providing for comprehensive customer service. Our construction mixes known under the trade name of Lipidur and Solidur are a supplement to our range of products. Lipidur is used in road building as a soil strengthening layer, while Solidur is used in hydrotechnical construction to strengthen and tighten floodbanks.

Concrete production is not about using traditional concrete mixer at the construction site and two employees manually dosing raw materials...

Of course not, at large construction sites, such as bridges, flyovers, infrastructure objects, or housing construction, it is not possible. Besides a precisely selected recipe, individually adjusted to a specific facility, it is necessary to comply with the entire process – transport time, temperature, use of a proper pump that allows supplying a concrete mix over a distance and at height, or simply with necessary care for concrete. All these factors decide about the quality and durability of a given structure. We have acquired that knowledge over years of experience and that is why our customers may count on professional advice so that executed construction complied with all requirements that are expected by the investor. We are observing that increasing more individual investors prefer purchasing concrete prepared in a professional concrete production plant. They may be sure that they will receive a top quality product and save lots of time when compared with traditional concrete laying methods.

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What are the plans of the Management Board for the near future?

Development of the industry is favoured by a good economic situation, and in particular that in construction business. However, it is known that in better times you should prepare for an economic slowdown – as this is a natural business cycle. We are aware that in difficult times, cost leaders stand chances of survival, or those who in a competitive environment can

maintain their advantage with regard to the company's operating expenses. This is our strategic goal. As concerns current issues, we put a lot of stress on safe and friendly working conditions. Man is the most important element of the manufacturing process, and life and health of employees are the utmost value for us. I do hope that our employees feel constant care of the Management Board in that respect and that they appreciate working at Dyckerhoff Polska.

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You have been involved with the cement plant for many years, initially as finance director, and since 1 April 2017 as general director. What are the wishes that you as the company's head and resident of the Świętokrzyskie region would like to be given?

In October 2018 it will have been 20 years since I started working at the Cement Plant. I would wish for myself to continue to be surrounded by well meaning and competent employees – since together we decide about the success of our company. I am also of the opinion that we have fitted well into our landscape of the Świętokrzyskie region, becoming its integral part and implementing well the concept of sustainable development – with respect for the natural environment, the local community, and the entire business universe.

Thank you for the interview!

Interviewed by IRENA HAMERSKA