



Kids' Time Kielce Trade Show Delivers on Excitement

10th anniversary fair, delivers a decade of toys, games and baby industry growth and discovery in Poland.

By Lena Hedö, Sweden, Reyne Rice, USA and Daniele Caroli, Italy/Russia, who work together in International trade magazines associations for the toy and baby products sector.

Held at the Targi Kielce Fairgrounds in Kielce Poland February 20-22, this business-to-business trade fair represents an attractive cross-roads opportunity and a gateway between Western Europe and the Eastern Europe, CIS, and Russian countries. With a decade of growth for the toy and baby industry business in Eastern Europe, it has grown consistently every year, from 1,5 halls in 2011 to 9 halls in 2019.

The fair covers 20,202 square meters. The largest worldwide key brands were represented at the Fair, in-

cluded a large representation from Polish manufacturers, Scandinavian brands, Turkish exhibitors and multiple global licensed and entertainment brands. MGA Entertainment had their own booth at the Fair for the first time.

Joanna Marcjan, Deputy Director of the Trade Fairs Department, responsible for the Kids' Time Kielce Fair announced:

– We have plans to build a new hall with 12,000 square meters, commencing in 2020, a continued sign of the importance and in-

terest in the business conducted at this Fair.

The President of the Targi Kielce Management Board, Andrzej Mochon, added:

– Kids' Time Fair serves as perfect proof of the rapid development and interest in the children's products and business services sector – not only in Poland, but from a global perspective.

The Fair has grown to include 566 exhibitors with 117 foreign exhibitors. 8200 visitors gathered from



Kinderkraft: This new entry in the balance bike market was designed by a cooperation between Poland and Israel and is available in Spring 2019.



Trefl: Octopus Party is their newest game invention, launching in 2019. Photo includes Sylwia Poplawska (Vice President of Marketing) and Aleksandra Krzyminska (PR and Promotion Manager) and Reyne Rice (Global Trend Hunter).



Cobi: A highly anticipated launch for June 2019, with 2,450 pieces, designed for ages 12+, depicts the infamous World War II Japanese battleship, Yamato.

47 countries, with the highest concentration from the surrounding Eastern Europe, CIS countries and Russia. Participating exhibitor countries included Belgium, Bulgaria, China, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom and USA.

– Kids' Time Kielce is an important fair, offering a more economical option for many trade guests, retailers and exhibitors, than the bigger fairs in Germany. We have lower costs associated with travel, hotels and other related expenses, which is especially relevant for exhibitors and visitors from Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Turkey. We are seeking exhibitors from the West and visitors from the East, especially from Russia, which is one of our



Urszula Kaszubowska, Editor-in-Chief, Branza Dzieciecea Toys & Baby Products Trade Magazine.

most important target markets, said Joanna Marcjan.

The size of the annual Polish toy market is estimated to be 800 Million Euros (\$900 Million US dollars) according to Pawel Szmids of RMD (Retail Market Data) Research. Sales last year were estimated

to have increased 5% in value and 10% in units.

Traditional Toys are once again in the main focus for Polish consumers, with 30% of all toys purchased through online channels. The largest online channel is Allegro, which established an early market share in e-commerce in Poland. 30% of the toy market is represented by independent retailer shops. SMYK is the largest nationwide toy retailer.

Traditional Games are receiving a renewed focus worldwide. This trend also holds true in Poland. Outdoor Sports continued to be a growth segment, the global trend of parents that want their families to engage in more sports and outdoor activities. Urszula Kaszubowska, Editor-in-Chief, Branza Dzieciecea Toys & Baby Products Trade Magazine confirmed:

– Toys that encourage parent and child interaction are one of the biggest and most important trends in Poland this year.

Poland has become a major manufacturing resource, reaching into all surrounding countries for export, representing the largest concentration for stroller/pram manufacturers in Europe. One of the leading Polish manufacturers, **Kinderkraft**, also claims the title of being the largest balance bike producer in Europe. Their CEO Leszek Kryseniel, explained:

– We have been successful by mer-



TM Toys: Their proprietary brands include Fru Blu bubbles, shown here with Commercial Director Radoslaw Hec.

chandising our product range online with instructional videos for parents and merchandisers, for both the Polish market and export markets.

Trefl is the largest Polish manufacturer and the fifth largest toy company in Poland, measured in market share. Their main concentration is games and puzzles, produced in their factories in Northern Poland. They began their company with producing puzzles, nearly 35 years ago, then added games 15 years ago, and for the past decade, they have added distribution for VTech, Hape, SIKU, and Science4you. TREFL is a family owned company that employs 550 full year workers, with a 2018 turnover of 40 Million Euros. The founder/owner is still actively engaged in the business. They export to 50 countries, through a broad distribution network.

Cobi began their manufacturing business 30 years ago, in the puzzles and games category, and then the founder Robert Podles shifted their core focus to construction for the most recent 20 years. They manufacture in Poland in their own factories and have a HQ office in Poland, employing 300 full-time workers. Their core strength leads the latest global trend, Kidults, where adult collectors are huge fans of their World War II themed, authentic and true-to-life highly detailed construction sets. Their most popular brand is their WW II genuine scale-model replications of battleships, tanks and other military models.

TM Toys began in 1997 and was originally operated by Brio Toys, Poland. They officially changed their name to TM Toys in 2006, using the first initials of the two major partners, Tomas Persson and his partner Magdalena Duhanik. TM Toys is a seasoned distributor of multiple large international brands, including Schleich, Ravensburger, Geo-Mag, Jazwares, Moose and more. The company's strategy is to distribute the best quality branded toys of recognized global manufacturers, with a special focus on licensed toys.

They have their own production and distribution, including their proprietary bubble brand, Fru Bru. Annual turnover was 50 Million Euros in 2018, with a growth of 20% over 2017. They have 70 full-time employees with many of their job functions outsourced, to keep costs low.

– One of our main assets is our flexibility, stated their Commercial Director Radoslaw Hec.

Interviews with three Polish manufactures and one distributor by Daniele Caroli, editor-in-chief at Parents' Choice, Russia.

Created one and a half year ago in partnership with Mini-Maxi, a Polish distributor with almost 30 years of experience in the nursery products market (ABC Design, Concord and Be Cool are among the brands they deal with at present), Muuvo was born with the idea to make every day easier for mothers, says Maciek Waloch, Project Manager: "Quick, our first stroller, was launched into the Polish marketplace in November 2018. It is very light and comfortable, reversible and easily foldable with its seat, a more Western Europe-oriented concept if compared with the bigger strollers which are a standard here. At Kids' Time we now introduce a new stroller, Flex. Our products are manufactured in China and their quality is good since our agents there gave us the right suggestions for the choice of the factory. We already have contacts with at least 10 countries in Eastern Europe and we have begun receiving orders. As to Russia, our expectations are good since we believe our prices are right for that market.



Quick stroller by Muuvo.



Scandinavian Baby's Piotr Dmowski shows the Kids' Time STAR award.

The story we hear from Lukasz Karwala, CEO at Avionau, is very interesting:

– The company was founded in 1980 by my parents – they still are in the company – who started with injection machines. Ten years later we began producing plastic parts, as OEM, for baby stroller manufacturers based in Czestochowa and after some time, as requested by our customers, we designed our first car seat, a Group 0+ model that could be fastened onto the strollers. Around 2012 I decided to develop more car seat models as a separate company that I called Avionaut. At present the two companies are reunited again in one. Thanks to special technology and materials we launched Pixel, the lightest 0+ car seat in the world, but very safe just the same. It took time to introduce our products into the Polish and international markets, but we were eventually successful, and we designed Aerofix, an up to 105 cm car seat according to the i-Size standard, that



Avionaut's Aerofix (left) and Pixel car seats with their base.

can be applied to the same base as the light one. Now we are focusing in the promotion of the rearward position through conferences where experts explain to retailers the differences in terms of safety. We export to several countries, Russia included, and we have just added a new model, Max Space (Group 2/3), to our range.

Established in 2012, Anex is a Polish brand specializing in baby strollers, car seats and accessories for parents, with production facilities in Poland and, for textiles, a manufacturing unit in Ukraine that also supplies other companies. In a few years, the company's products have reached more than 40 countries; in Russia there is a branch office. To Anex first models – Sport soon followed by Cross – two more have been recently added, the lightweight Air-X and the 2-in-1 system Quant, which are manufactured in China. – Air-X is foldable with one hand and can be taken into the airplane's



Bumprider's Nicklas Lindblad with the Connect stroller.

cabin, explains Vita Kovalko, assistant to the CEO and manager of the China projects. A totally new design has been developed in one and a half year by our R&D team for Quant, whose hood and some inner textile elements are made of recycled materials (plastic bottles); it can be folded and unfolded with one hand and it features the cradle's mattress with memory foam and LED frontlights to show the way in the dark and for safety.

Distributed in Poland by Marko, the country's leading nursery products distributor, Bumprider, owned by Elite Group AB, is a Swedish brand which was awarded the 2018 Kind + Jugend Innovation Award (World of Moving Kids') for its Connect stroller. The company's CEO, Nicklas Lindblad, shows us the product which can be easily converted into a twin stroller using magnets and informs us that the magnets now can also be used for accessories, a bag or a basket, tested for a maximum weight of 25 kg. It is expected that the Connect, already exported to more than 15 countries, will be available in over 30 by the end of the year. An improved version of the product, Connect 2, will be introduced at Cologne's Kind + Jugend show next September.

With 15 years of experience in the Polish marketplace, Scandinavian Baby is a distributor which deals with high level brands only: BabyBjörn, Baby Dan, Elodie Details, Herobility and Thule. According to Piotr Dmowski, owner of the company, there is a big evolution going on in the Polish nursery products market:

– At the beginning the traditional distribution channels were on top and small chains started developing with hundreds of family shops owning two or three points of sale; eventually, in 2006-7 many of them began to create regional chains. Mothercare was present with shops in good locations. When the crisis came in 2008, Mothercare disappeared and several shops closed. Then e-commerce emerged: mothers who had become confident with social media started selling online, in some cases opening bricks-and-mortar points of sale usually to be used more like showrooms. At the moment the market is highly fragmented because there are hundreds of Internet shops and all the time some close while others open. There is a leading chain, Smyk, but it is more focused on toys and clothes than on nursery products. Price is very important for most consumers, but for Scandinavian Baby's customers evidently it is not the main point.

The 11th edition of the Kids' Time Kielce Fair will be held from Feb 19-21, 2020.