

ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

The greatness of Katowice was built on coal. The city became the capital of a metropolitan area where mining monoculture dominated all areas of life: from industry to sports and culture. This was the case for many years until the time of transformation, forced by a change in global economic conditions and the depletion of coal reserves in the region. Katowice had to ask itself, what next?

The city answered the question and now consistently implements its decision to be a leader in innovation and new technologies. It is also at the forefront of Polish cities that have decided to develop modern business sectors. One of these sectors is the development of the regional office space market in Katowice. Just building office space alone would not suffice. It must be supported by the modern office services industry that had to be established and is developing.

One of its elements is access to employees. Every year about 25,000 people who enter the labour market graduate from Katowice's universities. They know languages and complete fields of study which are taught in a progressive manner. Are excellent candidates for employees of companies that have decided to set up their offices or headquarters. The human potential of Katowice is complemented by excellent technical facilities. As a result, global giants such as Mentor Graphics, Rockwell Automation, Hewlett Packard, Ernst & Young, Deloitte, Capgemini and IBM opened branches in the city.

The consistent policy of Katowice with regard to the development of modern office services contributed to a strong and growing property development market. Modern office buildings were built in the city, including the complex at Konduktorska Street, "Tiramisu" at DTŚ, a4 Business Park, the first .KRW tower. However, new buildings are not the only place where office services develop. They also enter the post-industrial landscape and use old factory buildings, giving them new life. This is the case in the Porcelain Factory at Porcelanowa Street, which was revitalised by the Gieshe Foundation. In addition to the museum part, a technology park was built there, where about 40 companies operate. These are IT companies, media and creative agencies, art galleries, showrooms, concept stores, as well as dental offices, aesthetic medicine clinics, hairdressing salon and a bistro.

The construction of the International Congress Centre (ICC) in the Culture Zone complemented the city's projects, which put Katowice in the position of one of the leaders of the cities developing office services. Together with the iconic Spodek, it is a conference and exhibition complex that stands out in Europe. From May 2015 to April 2016, more than 200 different types of trade fairs, conferences, congresses, festivals and meetings on the local, national and international levels took place there. In March 2016 the ICC hosted the conference of the Association of Business Service Leaders in Poland (ABSL). The organisation brings together 180 global investors. The special guest of the meeting was Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State in the administration of George W. Bush.

One can say that the economic transformation in Katowice has already taken place. The city has a new, completely different face than that of twenty years ago. However, it has chosen a completely different direction, such as the Ruhr in Germany, which focused only on culture. Katowice has become a serious player on the market of modern office services. A player who is still developing in this area and has not said the last word.