

THE SOURCES OF COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE OF POLISH PRODUCERS OF MINING MACHINES AND APPLIANCES ON THE INTERNATIONAL MARKETS – RESULTS OF QUESTIONNAIRE RESEARCH

Internationalization of activity is currently a very difficult task due to progressive globalization and strong international competition in almost each sector of economy. The success of this task is dependent in a large scale on sources of competitive advantage as well as on the market position of competitors. In the hereby article, the researched issues are presented in the context of the Polish industry of mining machines and appliances. The main objective of the conducted considerations and research is to identify the sources of competitive advantage of Polish producers of mining machines and appliances on the international markets. In order to achieve the objective formulated in such way, in the theoretical part of the article there are literature studies presented concerning enterprises competitiveness, and in the practical part there are results of questionnaire research included, conducted in the year 2012 among the Polish producers of mining machines and appliances.

Currently about nine hundred enterprises cooperate with the mining industry in Poland. More than two hundred are suppliers of machinery equipment and services for coal mines. The core of the industry is formed by forty enterprises that supply specified mining machines and appliances. The leaders are operating as a consolidated groups.

Polish producers export machinery and equipment to the following countries: Argentina, Australia, Bosnia, Belarus, Bulgaria, China, Czech Republic, China, Spain, The Netherlands, Colombia, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Mexico, Morocco, Germany, the Republic of South Africa, Russia, Romania, Serbia, United Kingdom, Vietnam and Ukraine. The most intense and longest trade in the sector is maintained in such European countries as Germany, Russia, Ukraine and the Czech Republic. Among the new directions of international expansion planned for the following years are: North and South America, Finland, India, Canada, Sweden, Turkey and United States.

In the light of the research conducted it may be concluded that the Polish producers provide a wide range of products and services to foreign markets from the industry of mining machines and appliances. The interviewees considered the main source of competitive advantage of Polish enterprises on the foreign markets to be price, quality and reliability. The less important factors are: meeting deadlines of orders and additional services. In turn, the main source of advantage of international competitors is price. Its fulfillment are: meeting the deadline of orders and additional services. It results from the above that the price advantage of Polish producers may lose its significance if it is also at foreign enterprises' disposal as they additionally offer the qualities to recipients which are considered to be less important by the domestic producers in a competitive struggle, that is: meeting the deadlines of orders and additional services.

The results of questionnaire research also allow to state that the Polish producers make an attempt to improve their image on international markets through marketing actions. A dominant form of promotion for the producers of mining machines and appliances on the markets of high export potential is currently participation in fairs. Personal selling, promotion through agents and advertisement in industrial magazines are also popular. However, enterprises do not use easily accessible or relatively cheap forms of promotion, such as translating website into a foreign language or recipients' recommendation. The Polish brands of producers of mining machines and appliances are barely recognizable on geographically remote South-American markets. The highest recognition of Polish enterprises is specific for Russian, Chinese and Kazakh markets. These markets are also characteristic for the longest period of cooperation with the Polish enterprises. The most loyal are considered to be Russian, Kazakh and Chinese recipients. Chilean and Argentinian recipients are considered as disloyal.