

## **Puolan Suomalainen Kauppakilta - Finnish Trade Guild in Poland**

### **BOARD ACTIVITY REPORT JANUARY 1, 2015 – DECEMBER 31, 2015**

#### **I. General**

The following persons were elected to FTG Board at the **2015 Annual General Meeting** on February 24, 2015.

#### **Board Members:**

*Johan Puotila (Confero Consulting, Managing Director) Chairman*  
*Anita Koskio (ExpatHouse, Managing Director), Deputy Chairman*  
*Piotr Pruś (ECOVIS Milczarek & Partners Law Firm, Partner)*  
*Anna Maria Kalamaja (Suomen Unipol Poland, Key Account Manager)*  
*Pauli Rumbin (HT Laser, Managing Director)*  
*Kari Vähäkangas (Finpro, Head of Finpro Poland)*

#### **Deputy Board Members:**

*Marcin Bruszewski (Fortum, Head of Legal Affairs Region Poland)*  
*Mika Leppänen (Lemminkäinen Polska Sp. z o.o., Managing Director)*  
*Pekka Männistö (OpusCapita, F&A Development Manager)*

The FTG 2015 Annual General Meeting also elected **three FTG representatives to the SPCC Board**: *Johan Puotila, Anitta Koskio* and *Piotr Pruś* (Deputy Board Member).

Johan Puotila was elected by the SPCC Board as one of the three Vice Chairmen for SPCC Board.

Additionally on April 9, 2015 the Extraordinary General Meeting of FTG was held. During meeting the resolution amending the FTG by-laws was adopted and the maximum number of the board members was increased from 6 to 7.

*Mr. Harri Reiman* was appointed as the seventh member of FTG board by aforementioned meeting.

During 2015, FTG was represented in all SPCC Board meetings by at least one FTG representative.

The FTG Board held **7 regular meetings** during the year, and several informal working meetings. In the first meeting on March 4, the Board updated the 2014 SWOT analysis for FTG and based on that set as its **objectives for 2015**:

- a. Retain current members and attract new members (goal to grow + 6 members net);
- b. Raise FTG profile among members and potential members;

- c. Secure improved marketing and continuation of basic legal advice services to SPCC members.

To achieve this, the Board adopted the following **key strategies**:

- Organize high quality FTG social/business events of interest to members, building on past experiences;
- Engage also potential new members in FTG activities, using events as a membership recruitment tool and for spreading information on FTG and SPCC.
- Work closely with SPCC board in order to achieve continuation of new services provided by SPCC for its members (like basic legal advice).
- Obtain testimonials from Finnish companies supporting idea of membership in FTG.

## **II. FTG Membership**

During the year, **FTG net membership** grew by 3 members, from 66 to 69 and **corporate membership** by 2 members, from 62 to 64. While 11 companies joined FTG during the year, nine resigned. At the end of the year FTG also had five honorary members; *Embassy of Finland, Embassy of Estonia, Finpro, Mr. Esko Kilpinen* and *Mr. Raimo Valo*. Mr. Valo, former FTG Chairman and one of the founding members of SPCC in 2003 was approved of as SPCC Honorary Member in the fall of 2015, on FTG Board's initiative.

**New corporate members** joining FTG were *Spondeo Oy, FKA Kancelaria Prawna, Promeco, Frosmo, Businesscouters.com Sp. z o.o., Coreplast Laitila Oy, Darekon Sp. z o.o., Comatec Oy, MCX Systems sp. z o.o., Kwintet Polska* and *CEE Consulting Group*.

**Resigning** were *Craftman, Kienbaum, Norpe Polska Sp. z o.o., Paulig Coffee, OK Money, Wipak, Snazzy Marketing, Aakkosto Oy* and *Wartsila*.

**SPCC corporate membership** increased in 2015 by 24 companies, from 341 to 365, with 23 new member companies joining, and one member company splitting into two memberships.

## **III. FTG Activities During 2015 - events**

The below summary covers **events organized by FTG**, not those of any of our cooperation partners or any of the numerous events equally attended by FTG members but organized by SPCC.

FTG organized its **Annual General Meeting** on February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at the premises of the Embassy of Finland in Warsaw. Present were 23 representatives of FTG member companies. During the meeting Ambassador Hanna Lehtinen presented a topical review of Polish-Finnish relations and issues of interest, and the meeting was followed by a cocktail event hosted by Ambassador Lehtinen.

On April 9, 2015 FTG organized an **Extraordinary General Meeting**, with 8 members present. During meeting the resolution amending the FTG by-laws was adopted unanimously, so that the maximum number of Board members was increased from 6 to 7.

On the occasion of **2015 Ice Hockey World Championships** FTG organized on May 12<sup>th</sup> an ice hockey event at Tortilla Factory in Warsaw. Ca. 15 FTG members and hockey friends gathered to watch the Russia - Finland game.

On May 14<sup>th</sup> FTG organized another ice hockey event at Champions Sports Bar in Warsaw. About 10 FTG members and hockey friends gathered to watch the Czech Republic - Finland game in the **2015 Ice Hockey World Championships**.

On May 28<sup>th</sup> FTG organized a relaxing **after work sauna & spa** meeting at Su Saray Hammam & Spa in Warsaw. The event was attended by 8 members.

The traditional "**FTG Summer Picnic**" was organized at *Wilanow Golf Parks* on June 13<sup>th</sup> with 210 participants, including H.E. Finnish Ambassador Mrs. *Hanna Lehtinen*. Guests enjoyed the great summer weather, the program as well as an abundance of good food and liquid refreshments. Many participated in the *Kemira Polish Open "Mölkky" Championship* contest and the *Barona "Mökkitikka" – Finnish darts contest*. A lottery with prizes donated by member companies was organized and the proceeds of 2 930 PLN were donated in full to support the activities of *Suomikoulu*, an educational program for Finnish children residing in Poland, designed to help them maintain their native language and culture

A warm thank you goes to the **Main Sponsors** *Barona* and *Kemira*, **Gold Sponsors** *Ecovis*, *Martela* and *StoraEnso*, **Silver Sponsors** *Fortum* and *Leinonen* and **Cooperation Partners:** *Cargotec*, *C.K. Fish*, *Dobre Wina*, *Finlandia*, *Finnair*, *Fiskars*, *FSP Steel Painting* and *Tactic Games* for contributing importantly to the organizing of this event.

44 FTG members and friends of Finland attended the annual **FTG "Rapujuhla" - Crayfish Party** in Warsaw at the Hotel Intercontinental Hemisphere Bar on September 19<sup>th</sup>. Guests enjoyed the beautiful set-up, traditional singing, the tasty crayfish organized by *C.K. Fish* and delivered directly from Finland with the help of *HRX Poland*, and the creamy salmon soup sponsored by *C.K. Fish*. A Thank You also goes to *Finnair* for providing once again the all important crayfish bips. In attendance as guests of honor was H.E. Mrs. *Hanna Lehtinen*, the Finnish Ambassador to Poland.

On December 4<sup>th</sup> FTG organized the sixth annual "**Independence Day's Night**" event at *Pure Sky Club*, to celebrate the 98<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Finnish independence. During the evening participants had the opportunity to socialize, to listen and to dance to the music of a live rock band and to enjoy good food and drinks. The event proved once again very popular, with ca 130 guests in attendance and was importantly and kindly supported by **main sponsors** *Fortum*, *Barona*, *Martela* and *OpusCapita* and **cooperation partners** *Finlandia* and *Finnair*.

To see photos from many of these 2015 FTG events, please visit <http://www.spcc.pl/en/sekcja/finlandia/2015>

#### **IV. Actions aimed to execute the resolution adopted by 2011 FTG Annual General Meeting regarding providing a basic legal advice service to SPCC members**

The AGM of SPCC included in the 2015 budget funds for providing a basic legal advice service to members.

The legal advice services under agreement with SPCC were provided by law Firm Smolarek Rogala, Caban – Attorneys at law (SRC). The rendering of services by contracted law firm started in May 2014, on the basis of one year contract. The FTG representatives in SPCC board actively supported the implementation of the project, based on members' views expressed in past FTG AGMs, and emphasized the importance of communicating the service actively and well to SPCC members.

By majority of votes, with only FTG representatives opposing, the SPCC Board decided in May 2015 that the agreement with SRC will not be continued after the one-year period but that the legal advise service will be discontinued. The reason was SPCC members' reported disinterest in the service.

During related discussions the FTG representatives noted that very few SPCC members seem to be aware of the service and how it works, and underlined the need for improved communication to members. As one example they pointed out that for example the contact information of the law firm providing the service had been posted on the SPCC website for the first time only a couple of weeks earlier. FTG therefore suggested improved communications to members, combined with a continuation of the service for another six months to one year, to assess the impact of increased awareness and to obtain concrete feedback from members that have used the service. This way also possible bottle necks could be identified and corresponding improvements considered.

Following the termination of the SPCC service, the FTG Board discussed the issue in its meeting end May and decided to assess whether FTG could continue with the service to FTG members for another year, financing it from the FTG budget and under a similar master agreement between the Chamber and SRC that was approved of in 2014. FTG Board representatives met next with the SRC law firm and concluded subsequently that such continuation would have no obstacles from a practical point of view. The Board also found that providing such service by FTG would be fully in line with the SPCC and FTG statutes.

The idea was next shared with the SPCC Chairman and Director on July 7th, together with a concrete contract proposal. In the following SPCC Board meeting on September 1<sup>st</sup> other SPCC Board members however expressed their doubts regarding the idea, noting among other that SPCC national sections are not permitted to engage in other activities in support of their members business interests than the organizing of cultural and social events.

After long discussions focusing also on the role and competencies of the four national sections, as described in the SPCC statutes, the SPCC Board agreed in November that FTG could implement the service, providing it is addressed to FTG member companies only and not marketed to other SPCC members.

The legal advice services for FTG member companies is scheduled to commence as of March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016. The FTG Board has at this time decided to run it for a period of one

year, combined with appropriate communications to FTG members, to assess its value and to obtain FTG members' feedback.

## **V. Amendments proposed to the SPCC statutes**

The SPCC Board decided unanimously in 2014 to propose changes to the SPCC statutes in the 2015 Annual General Meeting (AGM), to clarify the meaning of certain paragraphs and to bring the statutes up-to-date, without any material changes in the operating principles set forth in the statutes.

An important reason for this was that the SPCC Board had identified discrepancies between the original English language statutes reviewed and approved of by the SPCC Board and the members, and the Polish translation that was subsequently filed with the relevant authority. The purpose was therefore to also make sure that the official Polish version corresponded with the version that the SPCC Board and members had originally approved of. The FTG representatives took active part in the subsequent review work.

At the end of the review process it was proposed by some SPCC Board members that also material changes should be made to the statutes so that the SPCC Chairman's term-of-office limitation of four consecutive years is abolished. This way any future Chairman could hold this position in perpetuity, with no statutory limits. It was simultaneously stated that the practice of rotating Chairmanship between the four founding national sections, agreed on when the Chamber was founded, should not be respected anymore so that any of the four national sections could hold the Chairmanship without any time limits. By a majority vote, with only FTG representatives opposing, the Board majority subsequently decided to propose the removal of the Chairman's statutory term limit from the statutes in the upcoming 2015 SPCC AGM.

During SPCC AGM held on March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2015 the SPCC members present approved of all those amendments to the SPCC statutes that were unanimously proposed by the SPCC Board.

However, the Board majority's amendment proposal aimed at abolishing the term limit of the SPCC Chairman was rejected by a clear margin of the SPCC members present. FTG member companies took actively part in the meeting discussions regarding the rationale for and obvious risks of abolishing the Chairman's term limitation, and received wide support also from members of the other three national sections.

The FTG Board considers it very important for the future of SPCC that FTG raised its opposition to this misguided proposal, openly explaining its reasoning to all SPCC members at the AGM, thereby allowing members to weigh in and to decide on the matter in a fully informed manner.

## **VI. Other**

FTG continued to open many of its events also to "friends of Finland", to increase awareness of the Guild, its activities and Finnish traditions and to attract new members. **Circa 450 persons attended different FTG events during the year 2015**, compared to ca. 400 in 2014, 600 in 2013, 490 in 2012 and 460 in 2011. Participation in FTG events was maintained free of charge for members, with the exception of the Crayfish Party.

During 2015 FTG received a budget allocation of 22 866 PLN from SPCC, including a surplus from 2014, for national activities. In addition corporate sponsors kindly provided financial support totaling 40 730 PLN for specific FTG events. This kind support from member companies was very important in order for FTG to achieve the 2015 activity level, with broad participation.

Warsaw February 3<sup>rd</sup> 2016

Board of Finnish Trade Guild

Johan Puotila  
Chairman

Anitta Koskio  
Deputy Chairman

Piotr Pruś  
Member

Anna Maria Kalamaja  
Member

Harri Reiman  
Member

Pauli Rumbin  
Member

Kari Vähäkangas  
Member

Marcin Bruszewski  
Deputy Member

Mika Leppänen  
Deputy Member

Pekka Männistö  
Deputy Member