

► Discussing new trends in business economy hotels: (from the right) Janusz Mitulski of Horwath HTL, Jim Murphy of PREM Goup, Rune Askevold of Puro Hotels, David Heijligers of Louvre Hotels Group and Krzysztof Potocki of B&B Hotels



The 3rd CE Hotel Investment Conference, organised by Eurobuild Conferences

Hotels are back in town

FEW PEOPLE NOW DOUBT THAT THE HOTEL MARKET IN POLAND IS RECOVERING. BUT AS INVESTORS RETURN TO THE MARKET THE MAIN QUESTION IS, WHERE WILL THE FUTURE GROWTH BE CONCENTRATED?

Those who attended the 3rd CE Hotel Investment Conference were treated to a broad overview of the state of the market. Frédéric Le Fichoux, Cushman & Wakefield's head of hospitality for the CEE region, enthused that "the money's back". However, he also noted that the recovery was not uniform across the region. Although he described the Warsaw market as "mature", he also declared that "Bratislava is a dead market for me."

Currently many three star hotels in Poland fulfil the criteria of four star hotels. All the participants in the day's first discussion, which was entitled 'Business Economy Hotels - New Trends' and moderated by Janusz Mitulski, a partner at Horwath HTL, noted how the standards of four star hotels are seeping down into the three star segment. As Krzysztof Potocki, president of the board of B&B Hotels put it: "People don't want

to sleep worse than they do at home." Rune Askevold, CEO of Puro Hotels, compared his company to a budget airline, from its focus on cost-cutting to its wide use of computer check-ins. Other members of the panel included Jim Murphy, CEO of Prem Group, and David Heijligers, development manager of Louvre Hotels in Poland.

In the next discussion, all the panellists considered the conference industry vital for attracting foreign business travellers to the country. However, two requirements need to be fulfilled. Firstly, Poland has a need for venues that can host large events. When the construction



▲ Frederic Le Fichoux of Cushman & Wakefield Hospitality giving an overview of the hotel market

work is completed, the national stadium in Warsaw – as Rafał Głowacki, the national stadium's advisor to the board for customer service, pointed out – will provide a conference venue that will have around 15 or 16 events of more than 5,000 people every year. It will also contain ten conference rooms. Alex Kloszewski, Colliers International's head of hospitality, was the discussion's moderator, while the other participants included Guy Simmons, associate director of hospitality at Colliers International, Bartłomiej Walas, vice president of the Polish Tourist Organisation, and Sławomir Wróblewski of Meetings Poland. ►



▲ Alex Kloszewski and his panel discuss whether the conference industry is vital for attracting business travellers and hotel development





▲ Tomasz Daniecki and his panel trying to answer whether it is worth investing in hotels that are past their prime



▼ Rafal Szubstarski from 'Hotelarz' magazine leading the discussion on condo-hotels



The discussion on renovating hotels was moderated by Tomasz Daniecki, Cushman & Wakefield's head of project management. He was joined by Mariusz Kubal, managing director of Puhit, Zbigniew Paszkowski, from the Urbicon architectural studio, Leszek Mięczkowski, co-owner of Dobry Hotel, Krzysztof Kaniewski from Historic Hotels of Poland and Jacek Czepczyk, the general manager of the Europejski Hotel. Zbigniew Paszkowski agreed that renovating listed buildings could turn out to be a nightmare, but pointed out that despite the costs entailed, such hotels could be very successful.

The day finished with a discussion on condo-hotels. Those

debating the topic of this niche market included Rafal Szubstarski, the editor in chief of the magazine 'Hotelarz', Karolina Żelawska-Pałasz, director of the structured finance department of Bank Pekao, Jan Wróblewski, board member of Zdrojowa Invest, Radosław Borek, the sales and marketing director of the Condohotels Group, and Jacek Twardowski, managing director of the Kristensen Group.

The mood of the conference was bullish, as many discussed their future investment plans. But after all was said and done, what emerged most clearly was that the revitalised hotel market is not going to be quite the same as once it was. ■ AH



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