

**Remarks by Mr. Ole Egberg Mikkelsen, Ambassador of Denmark to Poland  
at the opening of the conference "Sustainable design in innovation driven business"  
held by the Patent Office of the Republic of Poland  
at the Warsaw Stock Exchange on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

Madam President, Mr. Senator, Madam Deputy Director General, Dear Participants,

Let me first of all express my sincere gratitude to the Patent Office of the Republic of Poland for inviting me to be part of the opening of this important conference. I am also pleased that the Embassy of Denmark has been invited to be an honorary patron of the conference. It is a great honour.

I take it as an expression of the strong partnership that exists between Poland and Denmark when it comes to innovation and creativity. Let me assure you that we are ready to work with you on deepening and broadening this partnership further.

What can Denmark offer in such a partnership? First and foremost, we can offer to share our experience in innovation, creativity and sustainable design.

Denmark is in the top of the global ranking of innovative nations and Denmark is recognized internationally as a frontrunner in several areas of technology and research with a global impact. Just to mention two areas:

Clean energy: Thirty years of focused energy policy has placed Denmark at the forefront in the development and use of renewable energy, such as wind, and Denmark aims to be fossil-free by 2050.

The Danish biotechnology cluster is a major world player, especially in areas such as bioengineering and enzyme research, with close collaboration between universities, hospitals and companies and a very competitive pharma industry.

Innovation in Denmark is closely related to design. Excellence in creating beautiful and intuitive products has always been at the core of Danish industrial design. Companies in the industry have used industrial design for decades to emphasize intended use and enhance the user experience. At the same time, Danes appreciate simplicity and functionality.

LEGO is a perhaps the most well-known example of this. The LEGO brick in its present form was launched in 1958. It is simple and at the same time complex. The interlocking principle makes it unique and offers unlimited building possibilities. At the same time LEGO has a strong focus on the environment. It was announced recently that a range of bricks will be launched that will be made from plastic based on sugar cane. That is a good example of sustainability and design combined.

Why is it that this strong combination of innovation, sustainability and design has evolved in Denmark?

The main reason is that we are a small, open economy. Our population is about the same size as the population of the voivodship of Mazowieckie, so our domestic market is very small. In order for Danish companies to survive, they need to be competitive in the global market. Otherwise, they will disappear. In order to be competitive, they need to be innovative and have a strong focus on design.

Now, how can Denmark share its creativity and innovativeness with Poland?

The good news is that this is happening already. There are about 500 Danish companies in Poland, employing about 50.000 employees. Most of these companies are global innovative leaders in their industries. At the same time they are well integrated in Poland and in their local communities, they have a local supply chain and they draw on the strong competitive advantage that Poland has due to its well-qualified labor force, its creativity and the strong tradition in engineering and science that you have in Poland.

To mention an example: The Danish windows producer Velux employs more than 3500 people at four high tech manufacturing facilities in Poland, their products are not only innovative, but they are designed to be green, energy efficient and environmentally friendly. The production is based on wood from Poland's forests, and the main factory in Gniezno is heated by wooden chips. This is a good example of sustainable design in an innovation driven business. I am happy that you have invited Velux to be on the panel later on today on "Designing ecological innovations".

Another example is architecture. On Friday, a representative of a Danish-Polish pioneer in designing ecological urban spaces and public buildings, Bjerg Architecture Polska, will be on the panel on "Urban Space Design".

The company was founded in Denmark but is now deeply rooted in Poland, their architects and urban designers are Polish and they have a strong track record with projects throughout Poland, sharing the same characteristics: they are sustainable and technically state of the art, while respecting the history and legacy of the surrounding area.

Thus, there is an excellent basis for a strengthened partnership between Poland and Denmark when it comes to innovation and creativity. Not least because there is strong and robust entrepreneurial spirit in Poland that is very conducive for innovation and creativity.

This potential for a Polish partnership with your Northern neighbors has been noted already. Last year the Scandinavian-Polish Chamber of Commerce published a report on innovative solutions of Scandinavian companies in Poland, with many concrete examples of how Scandinavian companies are already partners in the implementation of Poland's blueprint for responsible economic development, not least by stimulating innovation.

Undersecretary of State in the ministry of development at that time, Ms. Jadwiga Emilewicz, who is now the minister for Technology and Entrepreneurship, wrote the following in the preface to the publication:

"Scandinavia is a valuable source of inspiration for us when it comes to developing innovative solutions. It is therefore worth taking advantage of the Scandinavian experience and develop Polish-Scandinavian cooperation in this field further".

I could not agree more: The time is ripe and let me assure you: We are ready and I hope that this conference can be a step in that direction.

Let me conclude by extending my warmest congratulations to the Polish Patent Office on the 100 years of a system of industrial property protection.

Thank you for your attention.