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An interview with

Dr. Audronė Sankauskaitė, Senior Researcher of State Reseach Institute,

Centre for Physical Sciences and Technology Textile Institute

St: How important is the Lithuanian textile sector to the economy of the country?

Dr:

* 700 textile companies are operating around Lithuania;
* Annual value of the goods produced by the textile sector exceeds 1 billion EUR;
* Added value created by production companies reaches 0,5 billion EUR per year;
* Lithuania is one of the most specialized country in EU in textile industry.

St: How many people does the textile sector employ?

Dr:

* Textile and clothing industry in Lithuania employs 25.000 people;
* The workers of the sector makes 15% of all Lithuanian employees working in the manufacturing industry;
* This textile sector is the fourth biggest exporting industrial one in Lithuania.

St: How much does Lithuania export in terms of textile?

Dr:

* Lithuania is today among the 10 biggest textile and apparel exporters within Europe;
* Lithuanian textiles and apparel articles are widely exported: to EU countries, CIS countries, the USA, Canada and Asia;
* 76 % of all production is exported;
* About 84 % of Lithuanian textile exports go to EU countries;
* Main trade partners are Italy, France, Germany,Sweden and Denmark;
* The export of Lithuanian clothing and textile to Russia and other CIS countries has been continuously growing also.

St: How does the textile sector look today?

Dr:

* Today Lithuania is more than just a production source;
* New companies and business models are filling in the sector and supplementing a traditional sewing and weaving industry with modern and high added value services;
* Lithuania now is becoming a recognized intelligent supply management and global logistic operator for the North Europe and CIS markets.

St: What are the strengths of the Lithuanian textile sector?

Dr:

* Majority of companies are using new generation multifunctional material, which is supported by nanotechnology, plasma engineering, etc. • Textile companies have skills to create and manufacture new generation, high value-added products, designed for medical and protective use, aviation and space industries. • Companies are very flexible in production, capable to supply small, special design orders • Companies have strong technological, production and project management skills. • Employees are highly professional, efficient, ambitious and willing to change and accept new methods of work.Traditional textiles ( ex. Linen) are also considered as a strength of the sector

St: What are the opportunities of the Lithuanian textile sector?

Dr:

* Use of electronic means to enter international markets, possibility to create virtual industrial system; • Opportunity to significantly increase value added of activities ( design, logistics, etc) in economic activities structure of the Lithuanian TCL companies. • Possibility for separate companies and Lithuanian TCL sector in general to integrate into international clusters • Opportunity to develop new innovative products and use materials of new generation ; • Opportunity to develop products with private labels in the international markets.

St: Do you possess any statistics about popularity of the Lithuanian textile sector?

Dr: Sure:

* The biggest textile and fashion trade show in Baltic States ;
* TOTAL Exhibition area : 3 600 sq.m;
* Net Exhibition area : 1 570 sq.m;
* Number of professional visitors : 8 200;
* Number of participants : 210 from 21 country 6. Countries : Lithuania, Latvia , Estonia, Poland, Germany, Greece, Portugal , Russia, Finland, Italy , Spain , Sweden, Switzerland, Germany, Turkey, Belarus, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal , USA;
* TOP10 Export Partners for Lithuanian TCL producers in 2011 : Finland 3%, Latvia 4%, France 5%, Italy 5%, Norway 5%, Sweden 6%, UK 7%, Russia 22%, Germany 12%, Denmark 8%

St: Thank you very much, dear Dr.

Dr: You are welcome.