

Business Services seen creating jobs



Poland's business services sector will create around 300,000 new jobs by 2020, according to the Association of Business Service Leaders (ABSL), an organization representing the country's business services sector.

The largest Polish organization of its kind, the ABSL brings together shared service centers, companies that offer business process and IT outsourcing, and research and development facilities. Its members also include more than 180 global investors that foster the growth of Poland's market for business services.

According to ABSL President Jacek Levernes, the number of jobs in the Polish business services sector is growing at a rate of 10 to 20 percent a year. Most of the new positions are offered to professionals who have at least 10 to 15 years of job experience in the financial services industry, says Levernes.

The Polish business services sector at present employs around 212,000 people in 936 service centers across Poland. To compare, no more than 73,000 specialists dealt with business services in the country in 2008.

Last year, the ABSL launched a series of international conferences aimed at promoting Central and Eastern Europe as an attractive destination for world business leaders. This year's ABSL Conference will be held Nov. 9 at the London head office of the Bloomberg news agency. The leading theme of the conference will be how countries in Central and Eastern Europe should address changes taking place in the European economy and politics as a result of the immigrant crisis and the Brexit vote in Britain. Poland's Deputy Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, who is also minister for development and finance, will be a special guest of the conference.

During the event, the ABSL will unveil a report entitled Europe's Top Business Services Destinations. The report has been compiled specifically for the conference together with consulting firm Deloitte.

According to the ABSL's managing director Paweł Panczyj, the future of Poland's market for business services will largely depend on regular economic and financial training offered to graduates of non-business schools. Panczyj says that graduates of sociology, psychology and cultural studies form a large part of the 480,000 young people who finish Polish colleges and universities every year. The key thing is to teach them to navigate the business world as soon as possible, says Panczyj.

In September, the ABSL submitted a draft recommendation to the Ministry of Science and Higher Education with measures to be taken to foster modern competences and cooperation between business and academia, Panczyj says. The proposed measures are based on the experience the association gathered as part of a project called ABSL Academy, he adds. The

project encouraged close work with institutions of higher education to help them produce future business services professionals. The ABSL recommendation aims at enhancing the quality of higher education in Poland to meet the demands of today's labor market. The Association's program is designed to benefit not only students and graduates who are about to enter the labor market, but also long-time professionals who are keen to adjust their qualifications to the needs of employers, according to Panczyj.

ABSL Vice-President Wojciech Popławski says that employees are mainly drawn to the Polish business services sector by factors such as a clean-cut career path, interesting challenges, flexible hours with telecommuting options, travel opportunities and personal development opportunities that include foreign language learning. The business services sector has been growing particularly visibly in smaller cities where seasonal jobs, such as crowd-sourcing on demand, are offered by local small and medium-sized enterprises whose annual sales never pass the 2-billion-euro mark, says Popławski. This especially applies to services such as identity authentication and corporate data security."

One of the ABSL's latest initiatives is the Start-Up Challenge, a competition for young and innovative entrepreneurs designed to help them connect with international corporations. Of 68 businesses that entered the competition, the ABSL has chosen nine that will subsequently be introduced to executives from corporations operating in Poland. The association wants the competition to challenge the stereotypical, negative image of corporations in Poland and internationally. To this end, social media campaigns will be conducted on Facebook and Instagram with fan pages to put international employers in a better light.

The ABSL says it has for years lobbied for changes to make Polish law more business-friendly. It has been able to trigger a change in regulations on the employment of pregnant women to help them combine pregnancy with work. The ABSL has been also motioning for changes in regulations on job recruitment so that employers could check the criminal records of their potential employees. According to Panczyj, last year alone an inability to vet applicants cost the Polish labor market around 12,000 jobs that could have been created by foreign investors. Moreover, the ABSL wants employers to be able to check the credit history of job applicants, a practice that should allow employers to offer more jobs in Poland, Panczyj says.

Source: The Warsaw Voice