

INVESTMENT GOING STRONG

MODERNISATION OF THE YEAR AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE 21ST CENTURY OPEN COMPETITION

It is better to look for spectacular evidence of new architectural design and revitalisation projects not in big cities but in small towns and villages. A genuine leap forward toward top-shelf solutions is taking place over there.

Grand investment projects in big cities may be impressive, but over the past few decades, ordinary Polish citizens have already got used to them. Skyscrapers, ring roads, bridges and new housing investment projects, have become the everyday reality of life in cities with a population of hundreds of thousand of residents. They have ceased to impress with their scale and striking designs, because they have become commonplace. They leave Poles neither hot nor cold. They improve the standard and quality of life, but they do not cause emotions. The same applies to the modernisation and revitalisation of the existing urban fabric. Landmarks are brought back to their former splendour, and road improvements are made. Even if marble curbs were to be laid, few would bat an eyelid. However, when you travel to the countryside, in thousands of towns and villages, you can see great things which cause huge emotions.

Does the comprehensive modernisation of a railway station in the village of Teresin, just over fifty kilometres from Warsaw, with nearly 3,200 residents, deserve attention? Absolutely. For the commune, which is inhabited by almost 12,000 people, an overhaul of the former PKP railway station makes a lot of difference. Not long ago, the abandoned small station building of great historical value was off-putting, just like its immediate surroundings. Thanks to a costly renovation worth PLN 5.2 million, it is no longer just a railway station. It has become a modern community centre with a cinema and multimedia room, a library, reading room, debate club, room for film and art workshops and a terrace where summer concerts can be held. The building is now surrounded by greenery planted in a carefully designed, landscaped space. Teresin now has a new centre which was not there before. It is



currently the most important and the most attractive building in the village. The project was executed with great taste and flair. Several dozen architects from all over Poland took part in a competition for its implementation.

"Investment projects like this not only make places look nicer, but they also go a long way toward improving the quality of life. We don't just successfully conserve existing, valuable buildings, but we also breathe new

life into them,” says Roman Pikula, President of the Association for the Protection of National Heritage and Commissioner of the “Modernisation of the Year & Construction of the 21st Century” National Open Competition. Several hundred investment projects like Teresin are undertaken in Poland each year. For 23 years, the competition has granted awards for the best investment projects.

This year, Teresin was one of the first stops along the route the jurors of the “Modernisation of the Year and Construction of the 21st Century” competition took. Their task is to select the best projects in several categories: modernisation and renovation of historical buildings, schools, construction of roads and bridges, thermal modernisation of public utility buildings, urban space development and many others.

“This year, a panel of experts will visit nearly one hundred sites qualified for the final stage of the competition,” says Robert Plewiński, director of the “Modernisation of the Year and Construction of the 21st Century” competition. “506 projects have been submitted to this year’s 23rd edition. One fifth have qualified for the finals. The main prize is a golden statuette. Each year, it is increasingly difficult for jurors to select winners. With each subsequent edition of the competition, not only new investment projects are added, but their quality constantly improves. It proves that the competition participants understand the idea behind the competition. We are convinced that each new project is a perfect example for others to follow. Good examples encourage others to act, and thanks to that, not only in big cities, but also in small towns, the number of quality projects keeps growing. “Modernisation of the Year and Construction of the 21st Century” is a project which promotes successful local government investment and highlights the achievements of Polish architects and contractors.

EUROPEAN AWARD INTERNATIONAL CONSTRUCTION CONTEST

It is a one-of-a-kind undertaking in Europe. The European Award International Construction Contest honours the best European new construction and modernisation projects for their execution, design and investment process, as well as respect for the achievements of previous generations, and the natural environment.

Investors and contractors from Ukraine, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Belarus have been presenting their investment achievements for over a year now. The competition is gaining popularity, and in



Reconstruction of the building of Kryzhanivsky village council, Ukraine



the near future, there will also be participants from other European countries.

The ultimate goal is always to carry out new investment projects which prove useful and are easy on the eye, and to preserve the original values of old buildings, thus preserving the architectural heritage of European countries.

The programme supports and motivates investors, contractors and designers and awards prizes for their joint efforts. This is what makes it so unique. It is a grassroots initiative that brings together and enlivens regional communities, levels out differences, as well as increasing the competitiveness of regions, thus setting fresh social, construction and architectural trends in the countries which lie between the Adriatic, Baltic and Black Seas.

The competition promotes the functionality of modernised and renovated buildings and structures, modern technology and design solutions, the use of new techniques, effective and safe modern equipment, high quality of construction and conservation work, the use of new high quality construction products, positive environmental impact, and in the case of historical landmarks, care for architecture and cultural heritage, and preservation of the original value of buildings.

In the previous edition of the European Award, there were 50 entries, which were joint undertakings by investors, construction companies and architects. They competed for

the title of the best modernisation project in Europe.

88 participants from Ukraine, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Belarus and Slovenia have entered for the current third edition of the European Award. 12 projects have qualified for the final round.

GALA CEREMONY

The results and prizes will traditionally be announced at the Royal Castle in Warsaw, the former residence of Polish kings, on September 5. The award ceremony will feature the Śląsk Folk Song and Dance company. It will be attended by representatives of the Association of Polish Districts, the National Union of Village Administrators, Regional Marshal Offices and Regional Funds for Environmental Protection and Water Management. Honorary patronage over the 23th edition of the competition has been extended by Andrzej Adamczyk, Minister of Infrastructure, Marek Gróbarczyk, Minister of Maritime Economy and Inland Navigation, Minister Paweł Ciećko, head of the Chief Inspectorate for Environmental Protection, Minister Norbert Książek, Chief Inspector of Construction Supervision, and Andrzej Konieczny, general director of State Forests.

Media patronage over this year's edition of the competition has been assumed by “Rzeczpospolita,” “Inżynier Budownictwa,” “Murator Plus,” and “Polish Market.” •