

**Global Entrepreneurship Week 2013**  
**Remarks by Ambassador Mull to Lewiatan's Youth Forum**  
November 18, 2013

Good afternoon. I am happy to join Vice Premier Piechociński and President Henryka Bochniarz to kick-off Global Entrepreneurship Week in Poland. I am particularly pleased to address my remarks to the members of Lewiatan's Youth Forum. I read on your website that you consider yourselves a group of young, ambitious, full of energy people who are not afraid to take matters into your own hands. Hold on to that spirit. That is precisely the kind of drive and determination that Poland needs from its next generation of business leaders.

Poland is among the most highly educated, industrious and creative societies in the world, with a long history of producing educated people that have enlightened and opened our minds. However, despite Poland's long history of excellent higher education, today the country lags behind many parts of Europe in innovation and technology driven investment.

Many Polish leaders recognize the need to transform the Polish economy through innovation, and the government has already established a variety of programs to encourage innovation and cooperation between business and academia.

Such programs include:

- The Top 500 Innovators, a Ministry of Science and Higher Education program that sends some of Poland's brightest scientific people to training programs at Stanford and UC Berkeley where they learn techniques to commercialize their research and connect with business;
- The Foundation for Polish Science, which directs EU funding to relevant innovation programs;
- And technology parks that encourage business and research institutions to work together.

Despite these great programs, there is more that can be done. Here are some of the things you can do, as university students, to encourage development of a culture of innovation, among yourselves and your peers:

1. **Internships** – at some point in your education, I encourage you to apply for an internship here in Poland or abroad.
2. **Volunteer Opportunities** – Look for chances to help your community through volunteering at either nonprofit organization or government-sponsored program. Take time to learn about the problems and issues your community faces on all levels, and ways you can help.
3. **Business and Management Classes** – don't be afraid to take classes outside your major. Learning some practical management skills will also help you identify where you can add value through innovation.
4. **Participate in Contests** – you can find opportunities to test your skills on a practical level in frequently organized contests. By getting involved in a group project while you are in school, you get the chance to work together in a team environment to solve a practical problem.
5. **Find People with Similar Interests** – Look for people in your community, here on campus, or even over the internet with similar interests to your own. Find small projects you can work on together, either for school, or for yourselves that let you collaborate and build your teamwork skills.
6. **Don't be Afraid to Fail** – Many young Poles who've spent time in Silicon Valley – for example on the great Top 500 Innovators Program – say that the single greatest lesson they bring back from there is the idea that it's okay to fail. That's a pretty radical statement, but one which is central to the success of many of the greatest inventors and entrepreneurs.

The U.S. Embassy fosters a culture of entrepreneurship in Poland through networking and training programs. Just last month we sponsored “The Polish-American Innovation Bridge” in Krakow, which featured workshops and panels focused on building entrepreneurial skills, commercializing research, setting up and funding start-up companies, strengthening science-business collaboration, and promoting innovation in universities.

Today's activities in celebration of Global Entrepreneurship Week provide another platform for you to meet future business partners and refine your ideas. While you

are here, you can also check out online resources, such as the sites “unleashingideas.org” and “Up Global.” Up Global’s online platform connects leadership, resources, and entrepreneurs right here in Warsaw, for programs such as “Startup Weekend,” a 54-hour event that educates aspiring entrepreneurs by immersing them in the process of moving an idea to market.

I believe that you and other enterprising young Poles are well-positioned to take advantage of these resources. You have a passion for business and some great examples of other entrepreneurs who have made their mark. Let me mention Wojtek Inglot who was a young chemist when he founded Inglot Cosmetics 30 years ago. The company has a successful brand of breathable nail polish, which is unique in the cosmetics marketplace. It is now a successful worldwide retailer with more than 400 shops, including one near Times Square in New York.

I hope you will take inspiration from Inglot’s story, and listen carefully to the experts participating in today’s panel discussions. Learn from them and apply their advice. Take your business ideas to others, get them critiqued, and learn how to “pitch” your business concept. You, too, can build a successful business in Poland and create the career of your dreams.

Don’t be afraid to reach out to us at the Embassy, if you believe there is some way that the U.S. business community can help you accomplish your goals. We in the U.S. Embassy are here to be facilitators.

Thank you.