

# Expeditionously yours

*American Investor's* Tom Ćwiok talks with Arkadiusz Glinka, director for Central & Eastern Europe at the logistics company C.H. Robinson, about its business philosophy and how it is seizing opportunities in Poland

## What is the company's history in Poland?

C.H. Robinson and its affiliates form one of the leading freight forwarders in Europe, with a dynamic network of offices across Europe. Since 1993 we have developed services that set us apart from our competitors. Our offices opened first in Europe in 1993. In 1997 C.H. Robinson opened its office in the Polish market. The company then operated out of two cross-border offices and one global forwarding office.

The company expanded its footprint in Poland by acquiring Apreo Logistics in 2012, and is currently operating out of five cross-border offices, five domestic offices, and one retail distribution office. Also, there is a global forwarding office in Warsaw, as well as the C.H. Robinson division in Wrocław.

## What services do you offer in Poland?

We offer a powerful truckload network—from transactional to dedicated fleet for the most flexible capacity options for our customer's shipments. In addition to that, we offer Less than Truckload services, international air and ocean services, customs clearance and managed services. We also have a specialized department that handles liquid and dry bulk shipments.

In addition to our core cross-border and domestic road transport, global air and sea forwarding, and outsource services, we provide a variety of developing and value-added services. We typically work with our customers in multiple ways, from spot loads, to lane allocations, to fully integrated outsources. No matter what your needs are today or in the future, we've got the flexibility to provide you with the right services you need, when you need them.

## What is driving the market in Poland

## forward today, and what are the obstacles to business growth?

The growth of the Polish economy for the last two decades, at 3–4% a year, the fastest growth in the EU, has definitely played a big part in the industry. Global companies continue to open their doors in Poland, especially manufacturers who are looking for partners to bring their freight to other markets. Examples are the Volkswagen factory in Poznań, the MAN group which employs 4,000 Polish workers, and even the German fashion house Hugo Boss, which produces its shoes in Poland. These are all examples of how Poland has become a key part of the European supply chain.

Since Poland joined the EU in 2004, the EU has done wonders for it and the rest of Eastern Europe, ensuring democratic freedoms and administrative reforms and



Photo courtesy of C.H. Robinson

helping the region liberalize its markets. In the last decade, a lot has changed about the Polish infrastructure, including the highways that Poland didn't have before. There are new train stations and modernized railroads. The broadband infrastructure is in place, which plays an important role in how we do business and serve our customers today. Poland has become Europe's biggest construction site. Between 2000 and 2013, the aggregate length of Polish highways and express roads grew five-fold, dramatically reducing the cost and the time it takes to transport goods to the west. So we see the pros and don't see too many obstacles at present.

## What are the most interesting projects that C.H. Robinson has been working on recently?

Most recently, an avian influenza epidemic has hit the US, resulting in near devastation of egg-producing chickens in the upper Midwest. The recent widespread outbreak of avian flu, which can kill up to 100% of infected flocks, has spiked the price of eggs since early this year. The story is also gaining momentum as the Thanksgiving season and other poultry segments such as turkeys will be significantly impacted, with 19% price jumps in turkeys anticipated in 2015. One of our customers needed urgent assistance in maintaining their egg supply. This is where we sprang into action to help their client efficiently and "eggspeditiously" so to speak, with the import of eggs to the US. We managed to act quickly and found the right equipment to ship enough eggs from Europe, safeguarding the right temperature throughout the process. Stories like these happen almost every day.

## What are the company's plans for 2016 and beyond?

We are determined to continue our growth plans over the coming 3–5 years by focusing on our core road, air and ocean services, and by continuing to develop our portfolio of services. There are large growth opportunities in our current relationships as well as new relationships we are still discovering.

As we expand, we grow our ability to serve your needs in different markets. By listening to our customers and suppliers, we will continue to drive the growth of our core services, develop new and innovative solutions and add to our knowledge base through thought leadership and industry associations and events. Navisphere is our internally developed, global technology platform. It has been built based on decades of experience, aligning solutions with our customers' and carriers' needs. It links our network together and connects our network with our customers and carriers to ensure full visibility. We have dedicated IT and development staff in Europe to ensure alignment and flexibility.

Further to that, we believe if you invest in smart people who execute well-defined processes, supported by a single technology platform, you can provide a consistent experience to any customer across the continent. Our approach enables us to be in local markets and offer continuous collaboration between offices.