

October 2021

PCC

CHEM NEWS

Newsletter of the PCC Rokita Capital Group and affiliated companies

The PCC Group
*– chemistry that supports
green technologies!*



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The PCC Group

– *chemistry that supports green technologies!*

Did you know that the internet consumes more electricity a year than all of Russia? Every year, the internet network emits as much as 300 million tons of CO₂ into the atmosphere. Due to server rooms alone, its emission grows by an average of 10% a year. If the internet were a country, it would be ranked fifth in the world in terms of the amount of energy consumed! The internet means also countless kilometres of wires, servers, data transmission devices, which – when worn out – become waste, effectively polluting the environment.

As it turns out, one effective way to reduce the internet's impact on the environment lies within fibre-optic technologies. Thanks to the popularisation of optical fibres, it is possible to significantly increase the transmission range compared to traditional techniques. This allows for the elimination of many devices, thus reducing waste, saving energy and significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

However, the process of producing optical fibres requires a number of specialised chemical products. One of the key ones here is **SILICON TETRACHLORIDE**, which the PCC Group is currently adding to its commercial offer! The new product of PCC Rokita will be offered to cus-

tomers in two options. The first is technical-grade silicon tetrachloride, used as an intermediate in the production of metallurgical-grade silicon, silica and other silicon-based substances. The other one is 6N silicon tetrachloride with a **unique purity of 99.9999%**, which is a desired raw material in photovoltaics and the production of optical fibres.

Does the PCC Group have any influence on the development of sustainable technologies? A rhetorical question, but worth asking whenever we're taking up new business challenges

Go green with PCC!

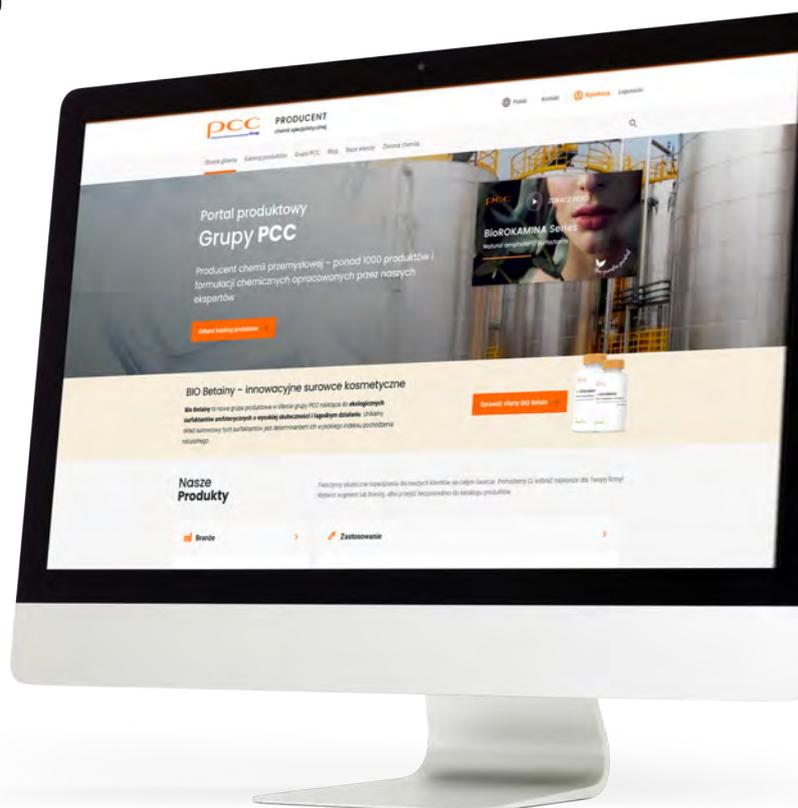
Beata Gruś
Marketing Department
PCC Group

We're developing the PCC Group Product Portal!

New functionality for aggregating products by CAS numbers.

The CAS number is a distinctive designation assigned to chemicals by the US Chemical Abstracts Service (CAS). This individually assigned number allows for unambiguous identification of a substance. It is one of the most widely used methods for identifying chemicals worldwide. Nowadays, there are various databases available on the internet, where, using the CAS number, you can find the name, structure and molecular formula of a given chemical substance.

www.products.pcc.eu



The vast majority of products offered by our companies are also marked with CAS numbers. Therefore, the PCC Group's Product Portal has been equipped with a new and useful functionality in the form of a website that aggregates products according to the popular CAS classification. It contains a specialised database, where we've gathered all the numbers assigned to our chemical products. Each of them provides basic information about the given chemical compound. In most cases, you can also check the item's structural formula. Thanks to the CAS number finder, our Product Portal users can easily identify the chemical substances they're looking for at any given moment.

The work on our CAS finder is still ongoing, as we want to improve and develop this tool – make it as user-friendly and functional as possible for the Portal users.

We would like to thank Alina Jakób and her team (PCC Exol) as well as Ms Julia Kita (PCC Rokita) for their invaluable substantive support.

For the inquisitive minds

In the past, chemicals were mainly identified with the use of synonyms. This method, however, wasn't effective enough as names were constructed according to regional conventions that related to structure, origin, and chemical formulas. Which is why substances that are well known to us may come under many historical, generic or commercial names.

CAS numbers have been designed with simplicity and consistency in mind, making them easy to find in databases. The CAS classification is therefore a reliable, international tool for identifying chemicals, where specific numbers are assigned to individual substances. Numerical identification is a very useful system for marking chemical products, especially as their names are classified in various nomenclatures and disciplines recognised by science, industry, and regulatory authorities.

Beata Grus
Marketing Department
PCC Group

PCC Exol continues to hold the gold CSR Ecovadis level. Results go up again!

The Company achieves high marks as a participant in the supply chain of global companies.



PCC Exol has maintained the gold level of corporate social responsibility awarded by the analysts of the EcoVadis platform. The company has been invited to report via the platform as a participant in the supply chain of global companies representing various industries.

The EcoVadis team assessing the reports of over 75,000 organisations from 160 countries around the globe consists of over 700 experienced experts representing 50 different nationalities. The gold level of CSR is a very important and extremely prestigious distinction, awarded for pro-environmental development and achievements in such areas as the environment, employment, fair business practices and the supply chain.

Given the global scale of Ecovadis' enterprise, PCC Exol is one of several dozen internationally operating chemical companies that regularly conduct comprehensive self-assessments as part of their sustainable production and consumption operations and social responsibility activities. The platform's statistics confirm the implementation of sustainable development practices, both in highly developed countries and regions that are at the beginning of their road to stable economic growth. Moreo-

ver, the EcoVadis assessment is one of several key elements of the supplier qualification systems of companies operating in various sectors of the economy around the world. This is also the case with L'Oreal and Oriflame – global producers of cosmetics, where PCC Exol is qualified as a supplier of cosmetic raw materials, i.a. based on the results of the assessment made by the platform's experts.

The fact that PCC Exol has been included in the 5% of the best-rated organisations in the world is truly significant. The group of market players representing the chemical industry who have maintained the highest results in the EcoVadis assessments for years include such companies as: DuPont, Akzo Nobel, Syngenta, Evonic, Saint Gobain, Bayer and BASF.

EcoVadis operates the first platform that allows companies to evaluate partners in the supply chain. The platform uses its own technology and a network

of several hundred experts to provide simple and reliable corporate social responsibility assessment cards. These cards cover 200 shopping categories, 21 indicators. EcoVadis helps companies to mitigate risks as well as improve innovation and efficiency within their logistics networks. Every year, over 75,000 companies active in the area of corporate social responsibility report via the EcoVadis platform in order to, among other, increase transparency and trust between trading partners.

Beata Grus
Marketing Department
PCC Group





Take a look at our new Greenbook!

Green transformation in the PCC Group

The impact that chemicals have on the environment is an inseparable element of innovation and modern technologies implemented by manufacturers of chemical products, such as the PCC Group. Our research departments have been successfully implementing the "Green Chemistry" doctrine by designing new products while taking into account various environmental aspects. It is therefore worth learning a bit more about how our organisation develops sustainable products.

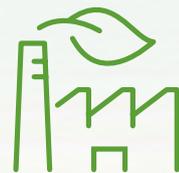
In the PCC Group, we've defined several key areas of sustainable chemicals production. The most important of them are:



using raw materials from renewable or natural sources,



reducing waste production and designing products taking into account their biodegradability and emissions reduction capabilities,



planning and implementing production processes with maximum reduction of hazardous substances use,



reducing the consumption of solvents and other harmful substances,



real-time control of the processes that may cause the formation of hazardous substances,



application of energy-saving production technologies.

Did you know that the "Green Chemistry" concept was introduced to the world of science in 1991 by an American scientist Paul Anastas? It was based on 12 principles that assume the design and production of chemicals to be as least invasive for humans and the environment as possible.

The above-described approach has resulted in the new GREENLINE® brand. The offered range of GREENLINE® products was created in accordance with the principles of green chemistry. The "green" items on offer include, among other, sodium hypochlorite, caustic soda, soda lye, the new BioRokamina range, and many other additives and chemical raw materials for various industries.

The green chemistry offered by the PCC Group is a whole range of products clas-

sified in terms of various environmental aspects. It includes substances and additives created for the purposes of ecological construction, products based on natural ingredients, natural detergents, biodegradable as well as vegan products, and many other.

The "green" offer of the PCC Group consists of highest-quality products with such certificates as ECOCERT, EU Ecolabel, RSPO or A.I.S.E. The production processes carried out in our companies are based on international management standards, such as GMP (Good Manufacturing Practices), ISO 9001 or ISO 14001. Also, the PCC Group's products from the green line have been awarded numerous approvals and industry certificates that qualify them for use in various types of specialised applications.

What exactly are the areas that the principles underlying the green revolution

pertain to? What hallmarks of "Green Chemistry" can be found in the substances produced at the installations of the PCC Group's companies?

Answers to these questions can be found in our "Greenbook." We encourage everyone to take a look at this publication, for it is worth reading and finding out how the PCC Group, given the great variety of its offer, has found its way in the green transformation conditions.

Beata Grus
Marketing Department
PCC Group

*"Greenbook" – Green Chemistry from the PCC Group – design and typesetting by Marta Lipka, Marketing Department, PCC Rokita SA.
<https://www.products.pcc.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Final-Greenbook-PL.pdf>

Digitalisation in the chemical industry

CHEMICALS 4.0

– you snooze, you lose...

Globally, the chemical industry still maintains a reputation of a somewhat old-school sector. This is mainly due to its long-established, very traditional approach to customers, based mainly on handshake relationships. However, customer surveys show that the industry has been rapidly catching up with the pioneers of the digital age. In fact, the digital transformation in the chemical industry started a long time ago...

This feature is based on the data provided in the ChemPoint report: "New Survey Charts Chemical Industry's Rapid Move to Digital".

Although views and opinions differ when it comes to the time and scale of the chemical sector's shift towards digitalisation, market research shows fast dynamics in the implementation of digital methods and provides directions for marketers working in chemicals.

Probably everyone will agree that in today's business culture, which is characterised by an availability of information from anywhere and at any time, the ability to easily search for information and use data shared online clearly gives a digital advantage to many manufacturers operating in the chemical industry and their customers.

Marketing research carried out by ChemPoint documents the chemical industry's adoption of digital communication methods as well as the fact that the transition to digital technologies is happening faster than many industry observers expected. The depth of change and the scope of various digital tools that are already used in the chemical industry surprise many a supporter of traditional methods of communicating with customers. The forecast for the future clearly shows sustained rapid digital innovation in the way customers connect with manufacturers, obtain information and make purchases.

Buyers of chemicals today expect information to be available immediately, and this is no longer optional, it's mandatory. Companies require this from their partners and will continue to try to eliminate delays or any "friction" in research and procurement processes.

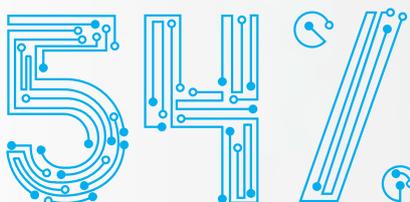
What does market research say?

There is very little historical data available on the marketing and communication habits of chemical manufacturers and their customers. The ChemPoint survey has opened the eyes of chemical manufacturers to new possibilities in documenting the methods and tools that customers prefer to use when communicating with manufacturers. The survey involved representatives of all major industrial sectors, including such as cosmetics and personal care, coatings, inks, adhesives, food, medicines, plastics and polymers, water treatment, packaging, aviation and aerospace, as well as manufacturing from customer-supplied materials, and many other areas of the industry. Here are the key figures:



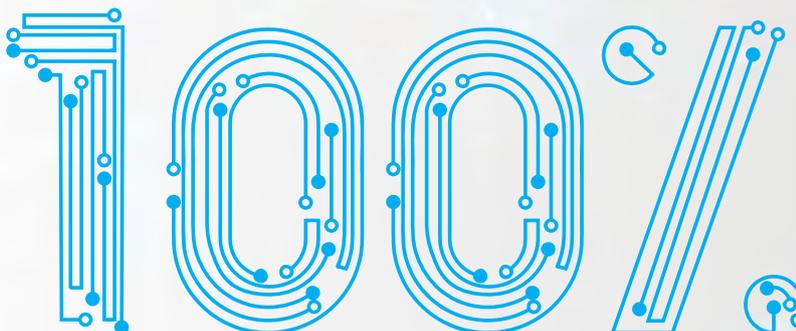
The era of digital technology is already underway!

Over 83% of buyers in the chemical industry say that the digital transformation of marketing is a fait accompli, albeit still remaining a developing trend. This is strongly confirmed by both buyers in all product niches as well as people holding positions in commerce, accounting, and research and development. More than half of the chemical industry customers surveyed indicated that chemical suppliers are developing digital communication methods to meet their needs for convenience and speed of communication.



Digital chemicals follow the pioneers!

54% of the industry noticed increased use of digital technology by chemical suppliers.



Digital technologies are everyday life!

100% of companies using chemical products reported regular use of digital technologies, such as product platforms and finders, CRM, or online conference platforms. Most of them look for information about products using internet search engines of chemical producers (See PCC Group's Product Portal).





47% 90%

The scale of applying digital methods is growing!

Over 47% of companies in the chemical industry have well-established digital methods, and their use is constantly growing. Half of the respondents stated that they currently use for work e.g. product finders more often than before, while all the respondents confirmed that they spend at least two hours a day on the internet, performing their business tasks.

Online information is essential!

Even though some customers miss face-to-face contacts (especially in times of pandemic turmoil), they realise that digital technology is a quick and effective way to learn about products and obtain detailed information on the latest advances in chemicals. In fact, an overwhelming 90% of customers claim that they regularly check manufacturers' websites in search of chemical raw materials.



93% 63%

Digital communication has come to dominate interpersonal contacts!

Chemical industry customers by far prefer digital communication as it ensures speed and convenience. Less than 60% of the customers reported that they now communicate in person, while 93% of them use online messaging. What is more, social media (24%) and text messaging (15%) are now becoming more and more popular means of communicating with buyers.

Buyers want to make easy purchases!

The convenience offered by digital technology is a convincing factor to buyers. About 63% say they prefer to buy from producers that provide information on the internet. They choose those suppliers who provide quick, easy and free access to information on chemical raw materials.

The "Customer First" motto is fully applied in the commercial as well as the research and development operations of the PCC Group's companies. This approach has resulted in the transformation of our R&D business and in going beyond the boundaries of laboratories.

Overall, digital technology is seen as the key to customer success. More than three-quarters of the respondents agreed that digital technology increases the efficiency of their work.

Conclusions to be drawn by pcc?

The "Customer First" motto is fully applied in the commercial as well as the research and development operations of the PCC Group's companies. This approach has resulted in the transformation of our R&D business and in going beyond the boundaries of laboratories. Of course, we see opportunities not only in close and direct cooperation with customers, but also in digital methods of presenting our commercial offer, modern methods of communication and data processing (customer master data). The PCC Group's Product Portal has been present on the market for a long time, gaining more and more popularity as a quick and easy-to-use search engine for chemical products that provides the user with a lot of functions and possibilities in obtaining information about products. The Product Portal is a gateway to the world. The number of its users has long exceeded two million. Interestingly, the range of our tool is practically unlimited. Today, we reach virtually every corner of the world with information about our products.

The effectiveness of efforts made to increase sales and acquire new markets is based on good understanding of customer preferences in terms of how to search for information about products or methods of communication. As a producer of chemicals, we should remember that as many as 63% of customers buy more often from those raw material suppliers who provide the necessary information online and are digitally mobile.

Chemical industry customers claim they definitely prefer digital methods, primarily because they are faster (71%), easy to use (57%) and more efficient (55%) than traditional marketing methods.

Are buyers' digital preferences the key to success?

Yes, of course! Make it easy for me to access information, communicate and shop! – this is what the industry is calling out to the chemical sector, and what should be the driving force of every chemical manufacturer in the digital age. Those who don't understand this and don't get the mechanisms of the market's digital transformation fall behind, losing the race to success. In the digital age, you should act very quickly so as to, at least, not lose your current market position. If you want to move for-

ward, you should accelerate really hard. Almost 2/3 of customers in the chemical industry are more likely to buy from companies that provide the necessary information online – that we already know. But it is equally important that almost 1/3 of them are neutral in this matter, although they do not negate the impact that digitisation has on their purchasing decisions. The number of such customers will gradually decrease in favour of that of customers who regularly use product finders and visit chemical manufacturers' websites. Here is where lies the potential for the PCC Group, which closely follows trends in digital tools considered helpful when it comes to customers making purchasing decisions in order to stay at the forefront of meeting their expectations.

Let us make it easier for customers to access information, communicate and shop. Let us share knowledge, improve and integrate our systems and databases. We've already achieved a lot, and yet there's still so much to do.

I encourage you to take action!

Beata Gruś
Marketing Department
PCC Group

BioROKAMINA

– *eco-innovations*
at PCC Exol!

Another green item on the company's offer
for the cosmetics industry.

The PCC Group have been implementing standards for effective production process planning and the use of modern technologies for years. The rich and diversified portfolio of the GREENLINE™ products allows us to enjoy a growing market position also in the sustainable production category. Operating within the structures of the PCC Group, PCC Exol takes part in the green transformation of the global chemical industry. Following the sustainable chemistry trend, the company regularly extends its offer with surfactants from the dynamically developing GREENLINE™ brand.

This year, at the turn of June and July, we had the pleasure to present our stakeholders with new green products from PCC Exol's offer. BioROKAMINA – a product series based on natural raw materials of plant origin – is another eco-friendly line on the company's offer for the cosmetics industry. The products constitute a response to the growing consumer demand for eco-friendly, natural cosmetics with a gentle effect on the skin and hair.

Find out more:[See detailed product description](#)[See video](#)[See product catalogues](#)

These innovative cosmetic ingredients of a unique composition were created for the production of high-quality, natural cosmetic preparations.

More about the products

BioROKAMINA is a new product group in the PCC Group's offer – eco-friendly, highly efficient and gentle amphoteric surfactants.

They belong to the group of chemical compounds based on natural ingredients. The unique raw material composition of these compounds determines their high natural origin index (according to the ISO 16280 standard). Bio betaines have properties that are particularly desirable in the cosmetics industry. These innovative cosmetic ingredients of a unique composition were created for the production of high-quality, natural cosmetic preparations, such as: shampoos, hair conditioners, face and body washes, lotions and moisturisers, feminine hygiene lotions, and other cosmetic products from the personal care category. Bio betaines have an antistatic effect, preventing static electricity in the hair. They also have a positive effect on the skin and hair, softening and smoothing

them. These compounds are also safe for people with skin prone to irritation and allergies, and can be successfully used in products intended for children and babies. Bio betaines, which include such products as: BioROKAMINA K30B, BioROKAMINA K30B MB, BioROKAMINA K40HC and BioROKAMINA K40HC MB, are produced using a raw material called Greenline MCAA 80% UP solution, i.e. natural monochloroacetic acid. It is made on the basis of natural acetic acid, produced in the process of plant fermentation. In addition, palm oil derivatives included in the BioROKAMINA MB product series are additionally RSPO certified – the MB variant (Mass Balance – www.rspo.org). BioROKAMINA is a series of products that are completely safe for both people and the environment. They can be safely used in eco, organic, vegan, and paraben- and GMO-free products.

Beata Gruś
Marketing Department
PCC Group

Tracing the environment...

One of the goals is to reduce the impact on the ongoing climate changes – changes that are caused by the excessive emission of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere and that have a negative impact on the environment, causing a number of dangerous phenomena, such as a decrease in water resources, frosts during the flowering and fruit budding period, torrential rainfall, droughts or the extinction of fauna and flora.

For the organisation, climate change is an incentive to transform and move towards low carbon emissions. We are currently observing a change in the approach of our customers, who are paying particular attention to the emissivity of the products they purchase.

PCC Exol has been measuring the carbon footprint of the entire organisation for several years now. Through participating in the CDP (Carbon Disclosure Project), we annually prepare a detailed emissions report. The information provided to the CDP is assessed, for example, in terms of data quality and

comprehensiveness, as well as the effectiveness of the measures taken to reduce emissions. Data reported to the CDP is audited by a third-party verifier.

This year, we're taking steps to calculate the carbon footprint of our products. Preliminary analysis is planned to be completed in the second quarter of 2022.

The carbon footprint is a type of ecological footprint that sums up to greenhouse gas emissions caused directly or indirectly by an organisation, or even by an individual. More than anything else, it is us – people – who contribute to the greenhouse effect. We leave a footprint through our daily activities, such as consuming electricity and hot water or using given means of transport. It is up to us to what extent we have impact on the climate change and the quality of the air we breathe. Changing your lifestyle and your personal habits is a key step in the fight for clean air.

Wiktoria Dudzińska

Management Systems Manager
PCC Exol

For several years, we've been implementing sustainable development goals equivalent to those of the UN's 2030 Agenda.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

1 NO POVERTY 	2 ZERO HUNGER 	3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING 	4 QUALITY EDUCATION 	5 GENDER EQUALITY 	6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION 
7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY 	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH 	9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE 	10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES 	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES 	12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION 
13 CLIMATE ACTION  15	14 LIFE BELOW WATER 	15 LIFE ON LAND 	16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS 	17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS 	 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

New quality of customer service at PCC Prodex!

In June this year, PCC Prodex launched several series of very interesting free samples of its two brands, Crossin® and Ekoprodur®.

Thanks to the convenient and modern form of the new samples, both authorised spray insulation contractors and investors operating in the construction industry have an opportunity to check out the appearance and quality of polyurethane foams used to make spray insulation systems that are produced on the company's installations. What's more, the ecological cardboard boxes used for packing the foam cubes provide – in a simple and elegant graphic form – a lot of very useful information about the products.

We are very fond of this type of projects! They prove that customer needs and market trends are the main focus here as well as that they visibly raise sales standards.

PCC Prodex, we applaud you!

Beata Gruś
Marketing Department
PCC Group



The 10th edition of the Scholarship Programme is here!

Monday 20th September saw 14 students set off on their adventure with several companies from the PCC Group to work on their master's theses and learn the specifics of working in our organisation.



This edition of the programme is quite special, given that it's the 10th one! In total, including this year's edition, our ranks have already been joined by about 60 scholarship holders. Some of them are developing professionally in our company, fulfilling themselves in such departments as production, R&D or sales.

What is the Scholarship Programme?

Its aim is to cooperate with the most talented university students – and not only those studying chemistry-related fields, but also those at technical faculties. Students complete their master's theses in cooperation with our company and do year-long internships aimed at acquaint-

ing them with the tasks performed at particular job positions.

Students appreciate the programme for the opportunity it gives them to see how such a large organisation as the PCC Group operates. It's especially valuable in the times of the pandemic, when most of the practical classes at universities have been conducted remotely.

We hope that this edition's students will too be satisfied. You will get a chance to learn about them, their motivations and career plans in the next issue of the newsletter!

Karolina Ławecka

HR Specialist
PCC Group

RECOMMENDATION ACTION

Refer friends for jobs at PCC
and get up to **PLN 3 000!***

REFERRAL BONUS AMOUNTS:

PLN 3 000 – managerial positions

PLN 2 000 – operators, specialist positions

PLN 1 000 – positions with no experience required

*the bonus will be paid out to you after the referred person has worked for full four months!
(except for the Operator position, in which case the payment is due after full six months of employment)

How to do it?



All you need to do is send the referral form, CV and the consent to the processing of personal data form to rekomendacje@pcc.eu

The documents are available on the “Pracownik PCC” portal and in the HR Department in **bdg G-1, room 6a**

**Recommend an employee
and get a reward!**



Holiday tournament for the summer cup

You could say, it's finally happening! We'd all been waiting a long time for this, for once again being able to interact in person with other PCC employees and enjoy time spent together at sports tournaments organised by PCC Rokita.

The tournament took place on our internal pitch and included 13 teams. After 91 matches, we finally had the winners – the PCC Apakor 1 team. Congratulations!

Maciej Trubisz
Editorial Team





5th place: CTP-3



6th place: GT



7th place: Exol



8th place: Apakor 2



9th place: Autochem



10th place: GE



11th place: G-5



12th place: GI

Customer Service Department - Gdynia



The office in Sosnowiec



Customer Service Department - Gdynia



Hello Summer!

Whether it's holiday or not, sunny or rainy, at PCC Intermodal our work commitment doesn't waver. This year in particular, there was a lot of work. After a difficult pandemic period, customers didn't risk going for uncertain solutions and utilised intermodal even more than usual.

There was no time for boredom, and sometimes not even for a vacation, but despite the many tasks, difficult infrastructure conditions and numerous weather surprises that kept putting the operational department on full alert both during the day and at night, we remained in good spirits – after all, teamwork is powerful! As part of the "Hello Summer" competition, PCC Intermodal employees showed us what their workplace would look like in a holiday environment. Let's see the effects of their work in some photos.

PCC Intermodal

Customer Service Department - Gdynia



Easteru Market Support Division - Gdynia



Customer Service Department - Gdynia



Administration Department - Breezy Doolay



Finance Department - Gdyluia



Marketing and Development Department - Gdyluia



Eastern Market Support Division - Gdyluia



Management Office / IT Division - Gdyluia



Accounting Department - Gdyluia



Elite Division - Gdyluia



Administration Department - Kutuo



Sales Department - Gdyluia





Cycling *on the roof of Europe*

My adventure with MTB began with all-day bicycle trips on tourist routes of Lower Silesia, where I live. With time, even the longest and most difficult routes became too short and easy for me, which is why I decided to start taking part in MTB marathons, but with time, these too no longer satisfied me.

The first "no support" race I participated in took place in 2019. CARPATIA DIVIDE is an ultra-distance MTB race (650 km, and 17,000 m of elevation) that runs through the Polish Carpathian range, mainly along tourist routes. The race, as well as the entire adventure, was amazing. Not only did I cover the whole distance, with a time of 106 hours, I also landed 20th place.

This was the moment I realised that such distances were "IT" for me. While cycling, I felt becoming more and more into it and wanted more.

This year, together with a friend I met during the CARPATIA DIVIDE race, with whom ever since then I've been planning and carrying out one mountain escapade and race after another, I took part in the 20K ultra trail in Italy in the EXTREME category, i.e. a distance of 1,000 km and elevation of 25,000 m. We'd already had a lot of experience in how to best prepare for such a long trip on technically difficult tracks with great elevations as well as in how to expend energy to be able to cycle for over six days with just short breaks for sleeping under the stars.

The challenging part of this endeavour was the significant differences in altitude, and thus the changing weather. The route ran at altitudes from 0 m above sea level up to about 2,700 m above sea level. At the top, the temperature was close to 0 degrees Celsius, whereas at the start line – 35 degrees. Another important thing in this type of racing is achieving the lowest possible weight of the bike with equipment. This means mainly removing the less important items from the equipment, such as an additional cycling outfit or, for example, an additional pair of socks.

Considering that my first bikepacking set-up weighed about 8 kg while my bicycle panniers in this race weighed only about 3 kg, I can confidently say that I'm a specialist in eliminating unnecessary items.

The most important elements of my equipment were undoubtedly the GARMIN bicycle computer, which smoothly guided me through the entire route without any problems, strong handlebar and headgear lighting – allowing me to ride in difficult mountain terrain at night, a high-capacity and fast-charging powerbank, additional warm thermoactive underwear for chilly nights, a sleep-

ing bag and a mat for sleeping under the stars, a toothbrush and a small bar of soap (in case there's time for a bath in a mountain stream).

This year's race started in Pinerolo, about 30 km from Turin. We knew from the very beginning that it was going to be the hardest race we'd ever participated in. Our fears were confirmed on the first day, when, after covering a distance of 160 km and 5,000 m of elevation, at an altitude of 2,500 m, we were caught in a storm, which, according to weather forecast, was supposed to pass us by, but instead, decided to accompany us. We managed to find a safe shelter from the storm only after about 30 km of a murderous descent in heavy rain and occasional lightning that constantly reminded us that it wasn't time to rest yet.



The challenging part of this endeavour was the significant differences in altitude, and thus the changing weather.



Each subsequent day looked very similar, only the landscape changed from Alpine to Mediterranean – however, this did not change anything in the route’s profile. We reached the finish line after six days and eight hours of virtually uninterrupted riding, winning 7th and 8th place. During the race we travelled roads and trails leading through the foot of the Mont Blanc mountain, the Tigne bikepark, the Iseran Pass – the highest road pass in Europe, the legendary Colle Delle Finestre and Assietta Road, Galibier, Izoard, and the amazing du Parpaillon tunnel. It was for sure the most beautiful route I’ve ever come across. I hope that the next ones will be equally beautiful and will give me the same amount of joy and satisfaction, for it is undoubtedly the best test of physical and mental endurance I’ve ever faced.



Krystian Lesiak
Environmental Protection Specialist
PCC Rokita



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A trip to Cyprus

According to forecasts, Cyprus is the sunniest island in the Mediterranean. The swimsuit season there lasts over eight months, and the beauty of its landscapes delights even those who are generally indifferent to nature.

I'm writing this text while waiting for my holiday in Cyprus, wishing to share my emotions and expectations with you.

Let's dive together into planning this trip. I hope that, like me, you are active travellers and instead of beautiful and uncomfortable shoes, you'd rather take your most comfortable sneakers, just like I will.

We're going to the highest cape, Cape Greco, which is located in a national forest park. The road to the cape leads along quite a comfortable and easy walking path. There is a lighthouse at the top, from which you can enjoy views over the city of Ayia Napa, the blue lagoon and the "Sinners Bridge" stone arch.

This is not some man-made monument but a bridge created by nature, similar to the one that Malta used to have – in March 2017, Malta lost its symbol, but fortunately I managed to see this miracle of nature and save it in my memory. The journey to the cape takes about an hour, but you have to take into account that there will be many stops to take a photo or a better look at something.

Next, the most interesting element of the plan, at least for me – we're going diving. On the west side, Cape Greco abounds in coastal caves and grottos made along the rocky coast by the mighty surf. The descent to the caves from above them is quite difficult, so we explore them while diving.

Don't be afraid of the word 'diving' and try it with me. I read on the internet that diving here is considered safe even for beginners, as the depth of water around Cape Greco doesn't exceed 12 m.

So, let's put on our scuba masks, fins and other gizmos and go dive to enjoy underwater landscapes, cardinalfish, soldierfish, bizarre flute fish, octopuses and Moray eels.

If you've never gone diving before, it will surely be an unforgettable experience. I've chosen places that will be most interesting for me, and I hope you'll like them too and consider them for yourself. Have a nice holiday, but if you've already been on one, I'm following in your footsteps now and enjoying mine.

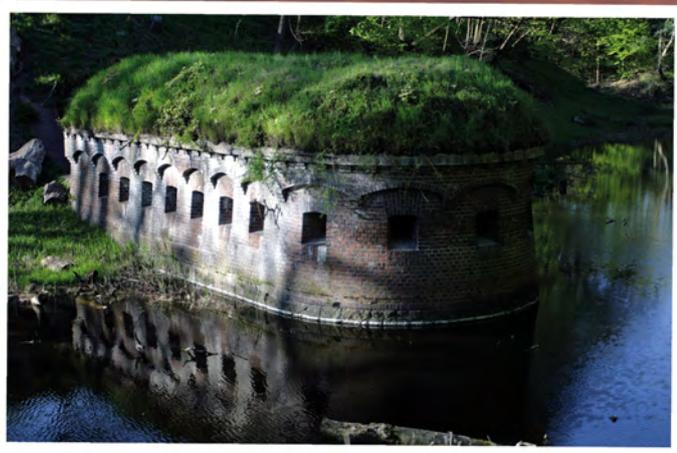
Daria Shushket
Customer Service
PCC Intermodal

An absolute must-visit

For me, Świnoujście is the most beautiful city on the Polish coast. It is located on 44 islands, only three of which are inhabited: Uznam, Wolin and Karsibór. In terms of costs, it's best to visit Świnoujście after high season, unless you have a free place to stay at. What's worth seeing there? I'll show you with photos.



The highest lighthouse (68m) with 308 steps leading to an observation deck.



Eastern Fort (Gerhard's), one of the three preserved 19th-century fortifications included in the Świnoujście Fortress.



The underground city is a complex of bunkers connected by a kilometre of tunnels. During World War II, the facility served as a coastal defence battery, and after the war – as Command Post for the Polish Army Command. The underground complex was built by Germans before the Second World War, but in the years 1955-1965, the facility was rebuilt by the Polish Army.

When in Świnoujście, it would be a sin not to go to the nearby village of Wapnica and see the beautiful turquoise lake, which is under protection.

From Wapnica to the vantage point in nearby Lubiń, from where you can see the islands surrounding Świnoujście. On your way back to Świnoujście, i.e. the base camp, you must visit Międzyzdroje, where apart from the famous avenue of stars,

you simply must go up to the vantage point and just admire the view...



A breakwater from the beginning of the 19th century, the western one, with the Młyn Stawa – a windmill-shaped navigation beacon, the central one, stretching over 1,400 metres into the sea.

Maja Heinowska
Quality Coordinator
OHS Specialist
PCC Intermodal



Shrimp and mussels at the hotel restaurant of the Barcelo Punta Umbria Beach Resort

Andalusia... *where storks winter*

Holiday in Spain is usually associated with Barcelona, Ibiza, Valencia or Madrid. It's a country full of places attractive to tourists, but why not for once follow the example of our storks, which, rather than in hot regions of Africa, more and more frequently end up in Andalusia – rich in their food and not much colder than Africa.

The region, of course, is not famous for bird migration only. It is a very diverse autonomous community of Spain, where everyone can find something for themselves. There are beautiful sandy beaches both by the ocean and by the Mediterranean Sea, numerous golf courses for fans of this sport, bullfighting arenas, and even ski slopes. It's also impossible to forget that this is the birthplace of flamenco and so, as it gets darker in the evenings, every street of every town resounds with music. Travelling between cities, you can see picturesque vineyards on hillsides, as well as citrus orchards or strawberry and blueberry fields – as much as 75% of the fruit produced in the region is sent outside Spain.

Despite the devastation caused by an earthquake in the 18th century, there are still many historical monuments in the region. The region's capital of Seville itself is home to one of the largest religious buildings in Europe – the Seville Cathedral. Entered on the UNESCO World Heritage List, the Cathedral is located in the very centre of the city, opposite the Royal Palace (interestingly, whenever a member of the royal family visits Seville, they must be accommodated at this palace, not being allowed to stay at a hotel). Both the Cathedral and the Palace will delight any architecture lover. It's impossible to take your eyes off the beautiful intricately made ornaments and ceramics, which are yet another thing inhabitants of this magnificent city can be proud of. There's also a story connected with the Cathedral, but I wouldn't want to reveal too much and spoil the surprise if you ever travel there and visit the cathedral with a guide. Just ask your guide about Christopher Columbus' travel stories and why the coffin is held up by four kings of Spain. However, as a good guide, I must

warn you – if you ever go to Seville, go by car or coach with air conditioning, equipped with head-gear and dressed as lightly as decency allows it. The temperatures in Spain are very high, and in the city, since it's located in a basin, the heat seems even more severe due to little air movement, and so, during the day temperatures can reach up to 40 degrees in shade.

When selecting a place for the base camp for various trips around the region, I recommend choosing one of the cities on the coast, especially a small town called Punta Umbria. Situated right by the ocean, with numerous hotels and Airbnbs, it is an ideal place to relax. It used to be a senatorial and leisure centre for an English mining company. The town isn't crowded and has its own unique atmosphere, being at the same time a leisure centre and a normal town where, apart from satisfying tourist needs, people also deal with such mundane activities as fishing, which, next to tourist attractions, is the pride of the region. Locals draw from the ocean and the nearby river in handfuls, which results in an endless supply of delicacies for seafood lovers. One of the town's attractions is a tower that was originally used to look out for ships approaching



The Seville Cathedral



The Seville Cathedral

the port. It was originally located on the very shore, but as a result of the aforementioned earthquake, the shoreline shifted so much that it now lies practically right in the city centre. An additional benefit of staying there will be easy access to the motorway and the possibility of having a short journey to Portugal, which is also worth visiting while you're there.

As for people, they are incredibly friendly. On hot days they usually stick to air-conditioned rooms, but after sunset they hit the streets, go to cafes and restaurants. Spaniards can be very friendly, but when it comes to the regions of Andalusia, if you think you know Spanish, coming across the local dialect may cause a bit of a shock. Unfortunately, unlike in the more touristic regions, you may have problems with communicating in English, but thanks to the aforementioned friendliness of the locals, you will quickly get along with them using a mixture of Spanish, English and gesticulation.

The matter of cuisine is too broad a topic to fit into such a short text, but I do want to mention that it's worth trying all dishes – everything from fresh seafood to oxtail, and you mustn't forget about fruits, which are one of the region's main products. Those with a sweet tooth can be very disappointed, however, as unfortunately, this nation doesn't have such deeply rooted traditions of baking as we do, so you won't have many pastries to choose from there. I wish to warn you though, so that you won't be disappointed – if you receive an invitation to a chocolate cake there, it may mean being served a chocolate-flavoured sponge cake without cream or any other filling. However, the aforementioned proximity to Portugal will allow even gourmands to fulfil their needs for all that's sweet, as it offers a much wider selection of pastries as well as very good coffee, which the country is famous for. Speaking of beverages, you cannot forget about Cava – a Spanish sparkling wine, which I heartily recommend.

When it comes to things that are worth taking with you on the way back, and not only as souvenirs, but also items that will not be as easily available and of the same quality as ours, there are quite a lot of them. Depending on whether you decide to visit Andalusia only or Portugal as well, you should definitely stock up on cork wood products, and I don't mean bottle corks, but rather bags, purses, backpacks or wallets, as well as many other items that I would never have thought could be made of this material. Another important item on the list is ceramics, which can be durable and beautifully decorated and can be purchased in many forms and sizes, just like cork products. When it comes to alcohol, it's worth buying the aforementioned Cava, and if you go to Portugal – liqueur made of bitter almonds (which, by the way, is not bitter at all), and of course, Port wine. While we're on the topic of beverages, it's also worth buying coffee. You can get it in any supermarket, but it's best to check if it's a Portuguese product. We learned that it's worth buying local coffee after the coach driver who brought us there left the supermarket with bags full of coffee bags. Cork products are also available in Portugal, but I warn you against shopping at market stalls, as while their prices might be similar to those in brand stores, the products will be of much lower quality.

I do hope all this will encourage you to visit the region. I'm sure I'll have fond memories from my stay in Andalusia and regret going there for such a short time.

Adam Kinka
Operations Department
PCC Intermodal



Stone pines in the dunes of Punta Umbría



Sicily

reminiscing holidays

I've often holidayed in northern or central Italy as I love both Italia and the people who live there. Now, it was time to go south, to one of the Italian islands – Sicily. All thanks to the photo of Etna that has been hanging in my living room for over a year. I wanted to finally meet her!

CATANIA

The flight from Katowice to Catania (south of Sicily) – about 2.5 hours. The first collision with reality of this place (apart from, of course, the terrible heat) – litter, litter, litter! The region is beautiful, but the level of litter in the city and on the nearby beach is so high that, compared to central Italy, it was quite a disappointment for me.

Accommodation in the very centre – on Via Etna (the main street overlooking Mount Etna), and a real wild-west situation going on all around it! Driving a car here takes some skill and is not for the faint-hearted – people do whatever they want, honk all the time, park one on top of the other (literally) and pay absolutely no attention to pedestrians. For this reason, we decided not to rent a car or a motor scooter and visited the surrounding towns by train or bus (which I recommend wholeheartedly – no delays, extensive network of connections, very convenient).

The place we stayed at turned out to be perfect – it wasn't noisy at all, and at least offered quick access to nearby pubs and stores. Another advantage was the large number of bus stops; plus, it took us about 20 minutes to get to the train station.

Catania itself is a large city with little to offer during an extended stay. On the plus side, there are a few nice historic places, the charming St. Agatha Square, cosy pubs, and a great fish market. The biggest downside was the littered area I mentioned – the beach, side streets and city outskirts.

PEOPLE AND CLIMATE

More than 90% of the people we met didn't speak English. But since we understand a bit of Italian, we weren't completely lost. It was also helpful that Italians gesticulate a lot, which – as you know – is an international language.

People in this region are very friendly – after just one visit to any eatery, we were treated like old friends, and any random person we passed by was willing to help us if there was a problem (despite the language barrier).

During this trip, the temperatures didn't drop below 35 degrees, and once even went up to 43 (it's always very hot there in summer, but this year records were reportedly broken). The readings were very high, and at the end of our stay, it led to fires all over the island. This part of Sicily is also characterised by black dust lying everywhere – Etna's doing, as it had been





reminding of itself for several months, covering the surrounding towns with this dust with each eruption.

SIGHTSEEING

We went to the beach of Catania twice – at the very beginning of this 7-kilometer 'sandbox' we managed to find clean and tidy parts, but close to the port. We travelled mainly by train to Taormina, which has beautiful pebble beaches and clean water. It took less than an hour to find ourselves in a charming historic place. Located on a hill, the old town offers a beautiful panorama of the Ionian Sea and is definitely worth visiting. Locals say it's one of the most beautiful places on the island.

It was a true miracle that two days after this trip we noticed from the balcony in our room that, apart from the smoke we'd been seeing for several days, something else was going on at the top of the central crater... something like a bonfire. We had an opportunity to admire the beauty of a volcanic eruption, all throughout the evening, as the situation was developing gradually. An unforgettable experience!

At the end, we took a trip to Syracuse. The ancient theatres and the beautiful seaside old town are definitely worthwhile. I'd say visiting all of the city's sights undoubtedly requires a whole entire day.

COVID-19

Travelling in the era of the coronavirus always has an aura of 'uncertainty' around it, but on our way, we didn't encounter any major obstacles. The flight went smoothly and safely – the crew made sure everyone complied with the sanitary standards, and the required formalities weren't too burdensome. At our destination, many people wore masks even outside (although they didn't have to), but this didn't destroy the 'normal' holiday impression.

We were able to enjoy local delicacies as we wished, visit monuments (at no point was anything closed due to covid-19); and in the evening the streets filled with tourists and Italians going out for long dinners with family or friends.

Sicily is beautiful and very diverse, which is why I recommend this destination for both relaxation and active sightseeing. We'll be going there again for sure.

Agata Abramowicz
Purchasing specialist
PCC PU

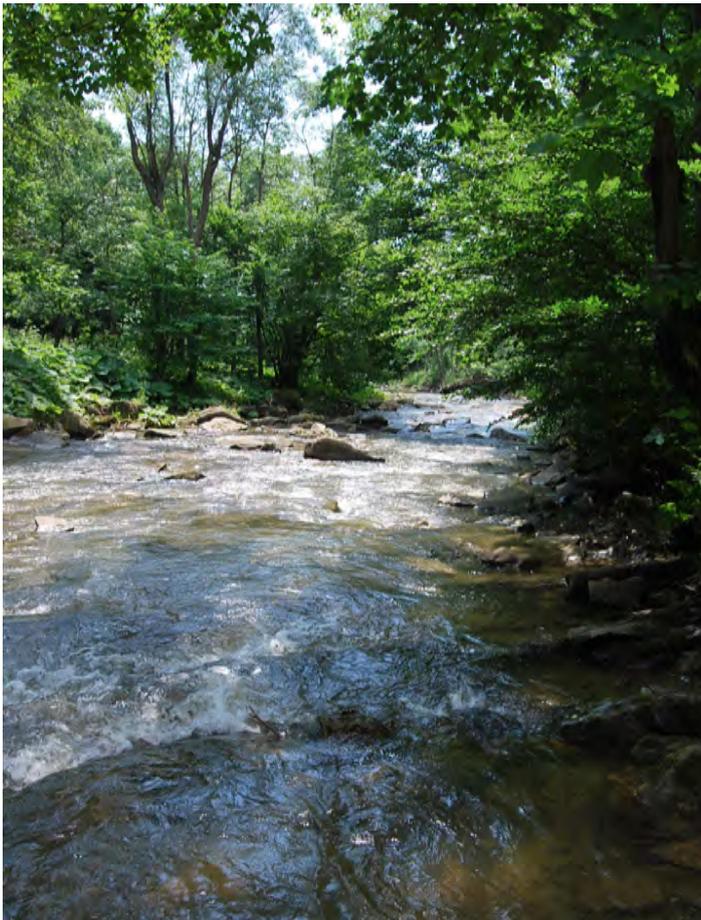
The main attractions of our holiday were a visit to the Alcantara Gorge and my dream trip to Mount Etna. It was fun to learn interesting facts about this place and the people who live there from two different perspectives – that of Asia, a Polish guide, and that of her Sicilian friend who's lived in Catania since forever. First, we took a walk along the waters of the river flowing in the Alcantara Gorge (great basalt walls at the foot of Etna), then a jeep trip up the Mount (people here say that you go to the mountains, not to Etna). First, wearing helmets and head torches, we entered the lava cave, and then it was time for the big hit – the craters of Etna and the history of its subsequent eruptions. Up to 2,000m above sea level you can walk around there without a guide (the highest crater lies over 3,000m above sea level), but I do recommend using their services as you can find out things that are not available on the internet or in a guidebook. The most interesting thing was the Mount's 'gravel' under our feet... it was something I hadn't experienced before – it's one of those things that can't be described, you just have to go there yourself. In this black desert, man seems so small...



A world completely free from the ubiquitous hustle and bustle

As I tread on long unused paths of different grandeur, I leave a piece of myself on them and take a piece of them with me in return.

MONIKA SZNAJDERMAN, AN EMPTY FOREST



I'd like to invite you to my favourite part of Poland – the Low Beskids. Be warned, though, it is a world completely free from the hustle and bustle that is so typical of summertime by the Baltic Sea or in Zakopane. I love long hikes in abandoned valleys and villages once inhabited by Lemkos. They were resettled after the death of General Świerczewski on the pretext of them having cooperated with Ukrainian gangs. Operation Vistula destroyed the world of these poor, hard-working and very tough people that had been living here for centuries. They left behind stone crosses, cemeteries, Orthodox Church sites and some ruins of cellars. Those most determined returned at the end of the 1950s and had to buy their own farms back. Wandering around this region can be demanding – it often requires crossing dozens of mountain streams and wading in mud. But the beauty and peace we get in return are worth all the effort.

Katarzyna Grabe

Insurance and Loss Adjustment Specialist
PCC Intermodal



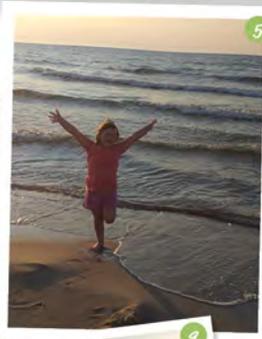


Your holiday postcard

Thank you to everyone for sending us your holiday postcards. All authors of the sent-in photos will be rewarded with small gift prizes. Please contact us by e-mail at biuletyn@pcc.eu

The winning photo was submitted by Mrs Mariola Cisowska, who sent us her postcard from Lake Bled in Slovenia.

Maciej Trubisz
Editorial Team



- 1. Mariola Cisowska - Slovenia, Lake Bled
- 2. Lucyna Jakszuk - Niechorze
- 3. Agnieszka Król-Gracz - Świnoujście

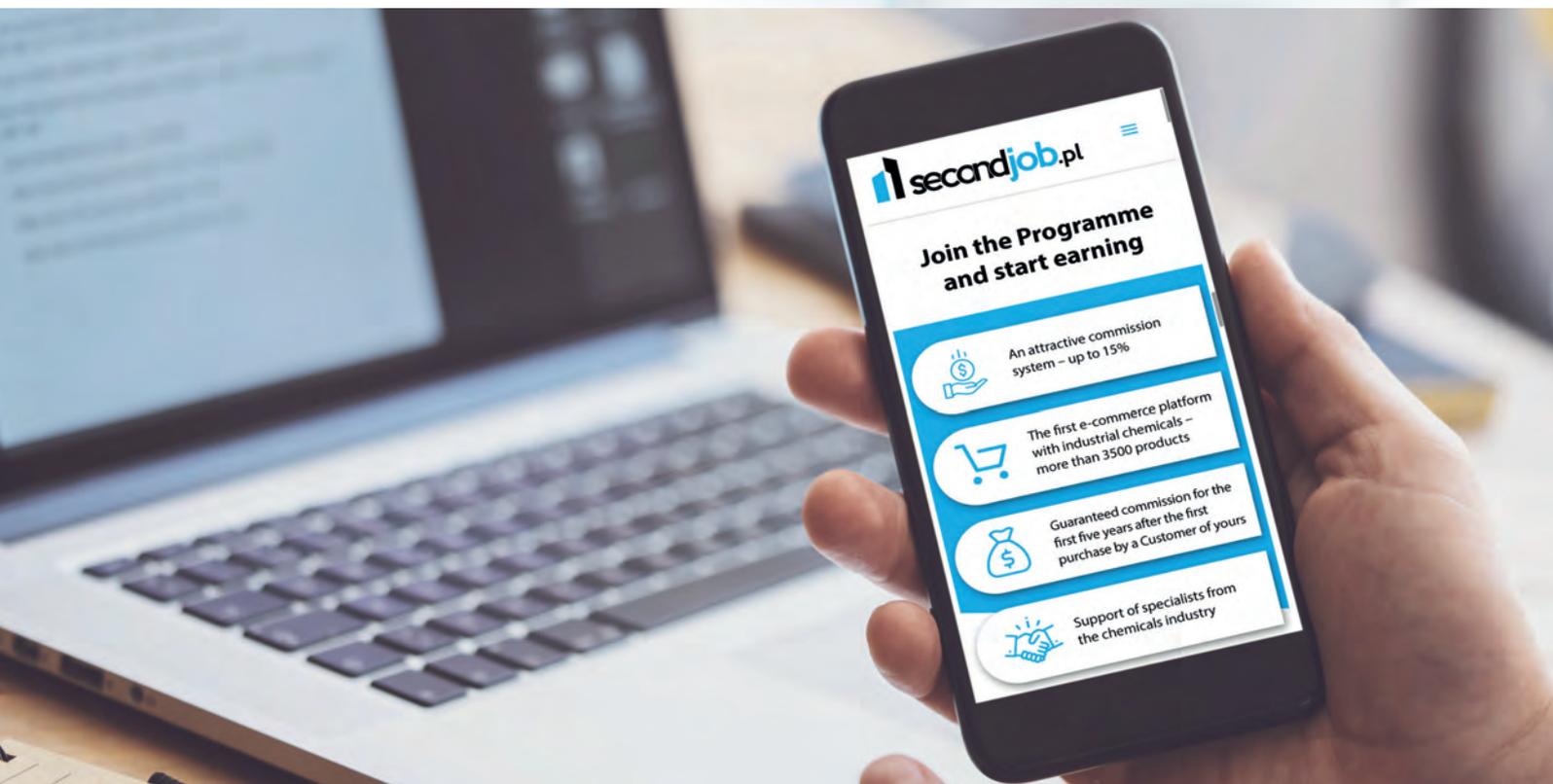
- 4. Beata Schubert - Bulgaria, Nessebar
- 5. Agnieszka Paciorek
- 6. Agata Brelińska - Wieleń

- 7. Julia Gajda - Greece, the island of Zakynthos
- 8. Karolina Ossowska
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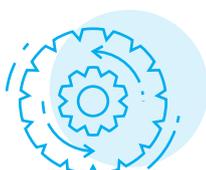
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