April 2022

PCC CHEM NEWS

Newsletter of the PCC Rokita Capital Group and affiliated companies

Easter

We express our deepest sympathy to our friends from Ukraine, especially to our employees and their relatives.

In the face of the tragedy, we stand in solidarity with all those suffering. Our gestures of good will, our thoughts and hearts go out to Ukraine.

Moved by the fate of refugees, we join in helping those in need. Protection of human life is of the utmost value.

PCC Group

Easter is a time of hope and promise.

We wish everyone that it becomes a source of spiritual consolidation, breathes love into people's hearts and reinforces faith in others.

May it give you strength to overcome difficulties and allow you to look to the future with hope.

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Here comes the largest investment in our chemical park ever

The – undoubtedly – largest investment since the very beginning of our Capital Group's existence is about to begin. The PCC BD company (in which PCC Rokita and PCC Exol each hold 50% of shares) will be responsible for the investment related to the construction of a new production plant that is to create the potential to increase the production capacity and range of manufactured products.

At the beginning of December 2021, PCC Rokita and PCC Exol decided to implement the largest investment in all their history, one that is to increase the production capacity and range of manufactured products.

The project is to be implemented in the chemical industrial park in Brzeg Dolny by PCC BD Sp. z o.o., a company co-owned by PCC Exol and PCC Rokita, who each hold 50% of its shares

Support for this investment will be provided by the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology and the Legnicka Special Economic Zone (LSSE). All elements of the investment are to be finished in 2026, which is when production is to be launched, making the production capacity of the installation with an estimated portfolio amount to approximately 50-55 thousand tons.

"The new installation will be the first of its kind in Poland – flexibly combining the production of ethoxylates and polyols," says Wiesław Klimkowski, President of the Management Board of PCC Rokita SA. "The adopted technological solutions and its versatility are to enable quick adaptation of the product portfolio to dynamically changing market needs," he adds.

The new plant will produce a range of ethoxylates, polyether polyols and other ethoxylated products, including biodegradable ones. The market strategy adopted by the companies of the PCC Group, aimed at diversifying sales to many different industries, is also reflected in this investment. The investment will have a positive impact on expanding the product portfolio of the PCC Group companies.

"Due to the appropriate combination of oxides and the use of new production technologies, the goods produced in the new plant will show lower volatile organic compounds emissions and have a shorter, as well as low-waste, production process. Also, the shorter production process will reduce energy consumption," says Dariusz Ciesielski, President of the Management Board of PCC Exol SA. "Additionally, due to the fact that ethylene oxide has a lower carbon footprint than propylene oxide, some products will have a lower carbon footprint," he adds.

Also, thanks to the investment, 55 people will find employment in the new plant.

Maciej Trubisz
Editorial Team

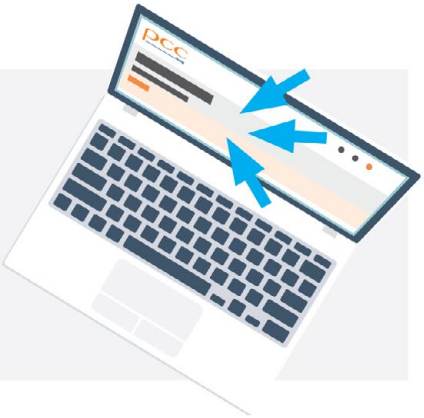
Hello, PCC!
What's going on in marketing?

PCC Group Product Portal
breaks records as usual!

Number of visits to the **Product Portal**
in **MARCH 2022**

240 000

increase of **186%** compared to March 2021



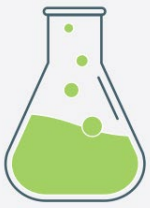
In March this year, the PCC Group Product Portal had its best performance since its launch. We beat the previous record of hits on the portal, which were as many as 240,000! In addition, we had the highest number of free hits from a Google search ever—210,000! (an increase of 220% compared to March 2021). The increasing visibility, growing number of sessions and number of sales transactions show great progress and are quite an achievement for us. The Product Portal team makes every effort every day to ensure that the business effectiveness of PCC Group's product search engine grows month after month.

Morever

1200

products and industrial formulations

250



products in the Green Chemistry segment

100.000

this is how many keywords the **Product Portal** is visible on Google

Some historical facts and comparative statistics below.

- **Start of work on the Portal**
  - concept - May 2014
  - start of works - September 2014
  - start-up of the Online Portal - November 2015

- **Currently over 1200 chemical products and industrial formulations.** In the first stage of its operation, the product search engine of the PCC Group consisted of 568 items. The offer is constantly being extended with new products.

- **Offers of 13 companies of the PCC Group** (PCC Rokita, PCC Exol, PCC Chemax, PCC Prodex, PCC Therm, PCC MCAA, PCC CP Kosmet, PCC Synteza, PCC Packaging, PCC PU, IRPC Polyol, PCC BakkiSilicon, DME Aerosol)

- **Division into 5 main segments**, in which we classify chemical raw materials and finished products of PCC Group companies.

- Separate offer for **32 industries.**

- **5 product filtering parameters** depending on the user's preferences in relation to the search method (chemical structure, function and application, industry, segment, manufacturer)

- **16 language versions** including 12 in automatic translation.

In the knowledge base and blog section of the Product Portal you can find information about new products and specialty chemicals for each industry. In addition, interesting facts from the world of chemistry and articles on the possible applications of our products are published there. Soon the new features of the Product Portal of the PCC Group will be available!

We encourage you to test the new version of our search engine. All comments and recommendations are welcome!

Product Portal Team
products@pcc.eu

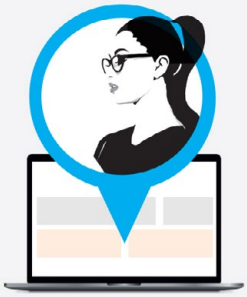
PCC GROUP PRODUCT PORTAL 2017–2021

Number of visits to the **Product Portal**

3 225 000

Number of users on the **Product Portal**

2 350 000



Number of free visits from Google search engine

2 500 000

Number of visits to the PCC Group Blog

1 000 000

PCC Group Product Portal has reached users from 231 regions of the world (countries, areas, or dependent territories).

They communicate with 700 languages and dialects.

A visit to the construction site of the Innovation and Scaling Centre

Work on the site of the most modern laboratory – and the Process Innovation and Scaling Centre at the same time – is in full swing. I talked with the Head of Research Departments at PCC Rokita, Igor Korczagin, PhD, Eng, about what the facility will have, for what purpose it was built, and what benefits it will bring to not only PCC Rokita, but also to the employees working there.

Maciej Trubisz: We are in front of a quite impressive building. What is its area and what will be in it? When is the investment to be completed?

Igor Korczagin: The building of the Process Innovation and Scaling Centre will have an area of approx. 6,000 m2. The building will house specialised research laboratories for syntheses, chemical analysis and application testing of all products offered by PCC Rokita. In addition, the Centre also houses a technological hall with pilot installations. These installations will allow us to effectively scale up processes from laboratory to production scale. We are also all waiting for the opening of the conference centre with back-up facilities, which is to be on the building's ground level. In a word, it will be a very advanced research centre that will support PCC's ambitious development plans for many years to come.parterze budynku. Jednym słowem będzie to bardzo zaawansowane centrum badawcze, które przez wiele lat będzie wspierać ambitne plany rozwojowe PCC.

Is it OK to say that it is the most modern building of this type in Lower Silesia? Or maybe in the country?

On the national level, it will be one of a kind, but it's not the walls or the equipment that make it unique. The building will provide excellent conditions for our specialists – employees of research and development departments. It is the people, their experience and expertise that will make this facility unique. We strive to ensure that our R&D works at the highest possible, world-class level.

What production benefits will PCC Rokita gain by having such advanced laboratories?

Thanks to the implementation of the Research Agenda, which had been written for the purpose of creating the Centre, we will be able to introduce new types of polyols for rigid and flexible foams as well as polyurethane adhesives and sealants. We will develop new base oils and lubricant additives. We will work on new raw materials for the construction industry and for the plastics processing sector. Additionally, thanks to the new research infrastructure, we will be able to support PCC Rokita's ambitious investment and development plans.

Advanced technologies and continuous research should also enable gaining a competitive advantage. Will we be able to call the project a success only after these new products are created, or will the Innovation and Scaling Centre also allow us to refine the products already present in the product portfolio and make them even better?

The R&D department that will be using the Centre works not only on the development of new solutions. We also provide technical support for the production and sale of the already existing products. We are constantly working on improving the existing technologies, looking for new and alternative raw materials – all to ensure that we provide our customers with products of the highest quality possible.

Everything you talk about seems extremely attractive. Attractive not only for the company itself, but also – I think it's worth mentioning the benefits it will bring to the employees. Is it safe to say that it will be a unique workplace on the map of Poland for any laboratory worker or R&D specialist?

Absolutely! My ambition has always been to pursue research and development at the highest world level. This applies not only to research equipment, approach to projects, digitisation, the use of state-of-the-art technologies, but also to laboratory infrastructure. The new Centre will be a place where all this will actually happen in one of the most modern facilities of this type in Poland and Europe.

The huge laboratory area will require appropriate staff. Has the recruitment process already started? Who are you looking for to work in these laboratories?

Of course, we will be wanting specialists with chemical technology, analytical and application research experience.

The creation of the Process Innovation and Scaling Centre is a huge investment of PCC Rokita. We know that the company managed to obtain external funds for the construction of this facility. Where did the funds come from and what will they be spent on?

The project: "Construction of the Process Innovation and Scaling Centre" received funding from the EU under the Intelligent Development Operational Programme (Measure 2.1: Support for Investments in R&D Infrastructure of Enterprises). This co-financing amounts to almost PLN 14 million. The aim of the project is to provide PCC Rokita with resources enabling the implementation of the Research Agenda, which consists in carrying out innovative R&D works. The anticipated effect of the project is the construction of the laboratory with a scaling hall and a warehouse, as well as the purchase of furniture and laboratory equipment.

Thank you for the interview.

Thai & Malay!

Our new window to the world!
With a view to Asia

Thailand and Malaysia are both distant, exotic lands for us. The two regions are where the Asian industry hearts beat strongly, pumping various raw materials and goods into the bloodstream of the global economy! And the other way round…
For them to thrive and look to the future with optimism, they need external power. These markets need capital, knowledge, distribution channels, well-organised transportation and countless raw materials, including chemicals of high, world-class quality.

Where can Thai and Malay specialists in various industries find producers of chemical raw materials offering a wide range of products to markets around the world the fastest?

Online!

This is why, today, the PCC Group are opening another window to the world! And this one overlooks Asia – warm greetings to all Thai and Malay online chemical seekers!

Starting today, the PRODUCT PORTAL will be available also in Malay and Thai, bringing the total number of its language versions to 16!

For all the curious cats…

The population of Malaysia is almost 34 million, while Thailand – around 70 million. In Thailand's southern border provinces, namely Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat, the majority of the population are Malay Muslims.
In daily life, they effortlessly switch from Thai to Malay and vice versa.

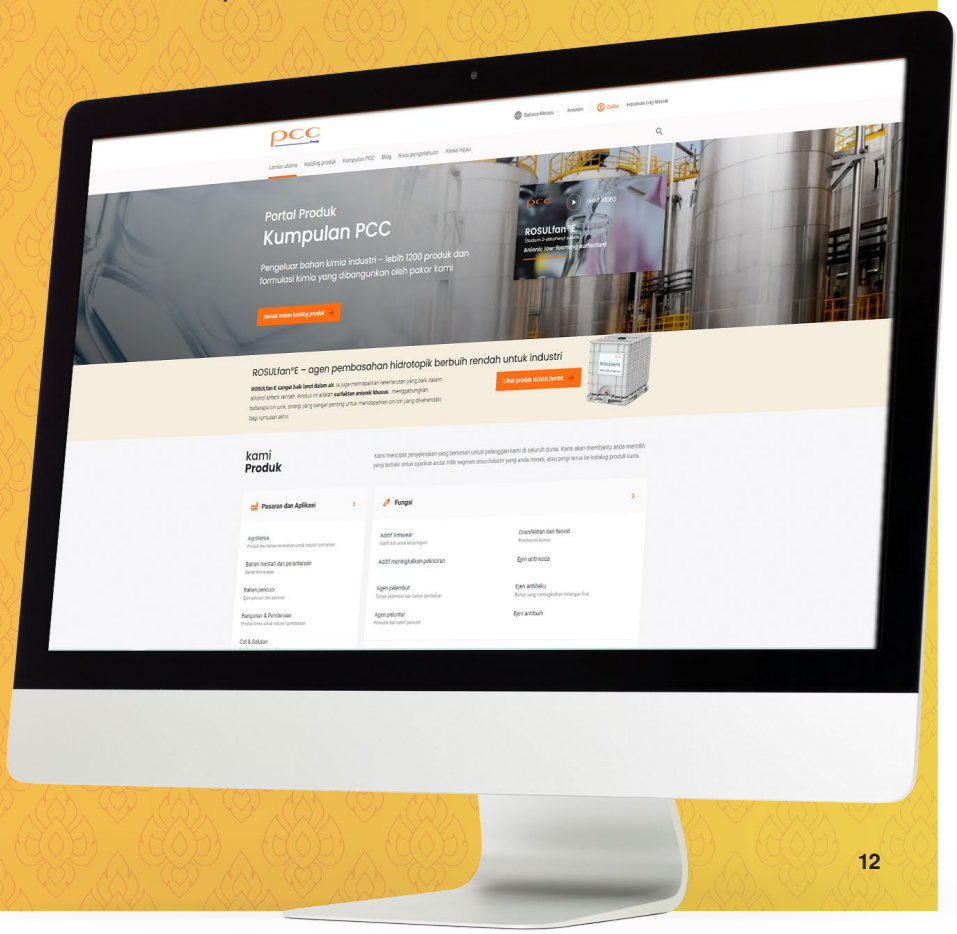
Why?

Because Thailand is home to the third largest ethnic Malay population, after Malaysia and Indonesia, and most Malaya live in the southern provinces of Narathiwat, Pattani, Yala, Songkhla and Satun. There are also many people of Malayan origin in Phuket and Ranong, where there is a large Muslim population.

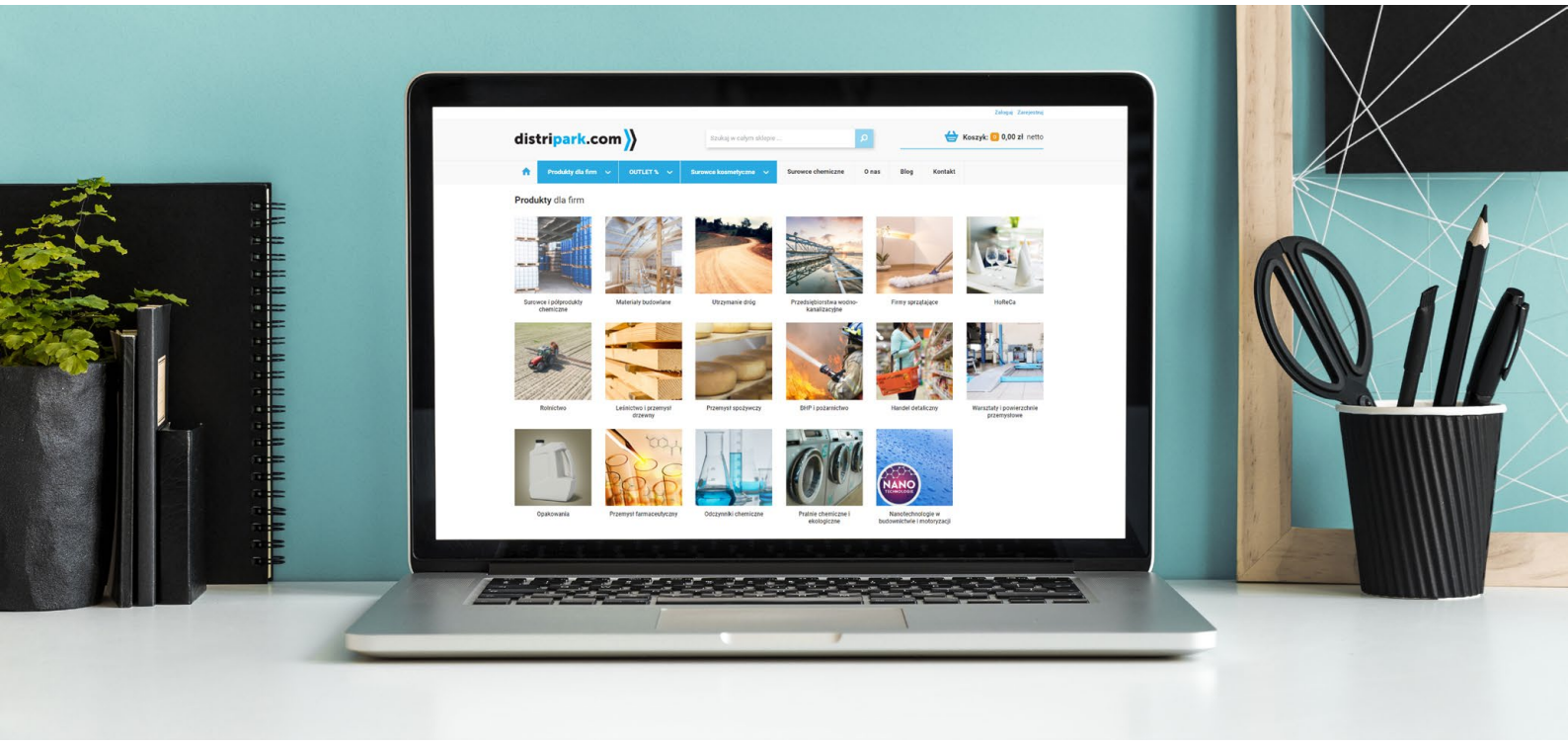
Overall, the combined population of Thailand and Malaysia is around 104 million! Part of this impressive population speaks both Thai and Malay.

And from now on, all of them can read the content on the PCC Group's Product Portal in their native language, or just change the language to English, or Thai or Malay.

Beata Gruś
Marketing Department
PCC Group



distripark.com



distripark.com – WHO ARE WE?

The distripark.com internet platform is the first chemical wholesaler operating in Poland in the e-commerce system, offering a wide range of chemical raw materials and finished products for industry and the service sector.

The distripark.com chemical wholesaler is part of the German PCC SE holding, which is present in several dozen countries around the world. The PCC Group consists of entities operating in the following sectors:

- chemistry: polyols, chlorine, specialty chemicals, surfactants and consumer products;
- logistics;
- energy;
- holding/projects

WHY IS IT WORTH WORKING WITH US?

One of the key competitive advantages of the distripark.com chemical wholesaler is direct access to a wide range of raw materials, components, additives, industrial formulations and finished products. They are mostly produced on the installations of production companies operating within the PCC Group.

The distripark.com platform also offers products that the PCC Group companies do not. These are mainly chemical substances intended for further processing in industry, as well as various types

of goods intended for the service sector.

For production and service companies, shopping on the distripark.com platform means a whole set of benefits. The most important of them are:

- high-quality products,
- access to a very wide offer,
- sale without intermediaries,
- great prices,
- outlet – price deals,
- easy, intuitive platform use,
- short delivery times,
- convenient payment methods,
- product advice with the support of experts from PCC Group companies.

An important aspect of cooperating with distripark.com is product availability. In the conditions of a stable chemical market, regular supply of distripark.com's warehouses is regulated by contracts signed with producers operating in the PCC Group as well as with external suppliers.

Timely deliveries of ordered raw materials and finished products by distripark.com provide recipients with the possibility to plan production and perform services precisely. What's more, when purchasing online, they don't have to go through complicated procedures that usually extend the process of placing an order.

WHAT PRODUCTS DOES DISTRIPARK.COM OFFER?

The broad offer of the distripark.com chemical wholesaler is successively expanded with new items dedicated to various industries.

The basic chemical groups that include the products offered by the distripark.com wholesaler are:

- chlorine and alkali;
- surface-active agents (surfactants) with various functions and parameters. These include: wetting, washing, cleaning and emulsifying agents, dispersants, viscosity regulators, stabilising agents, humectants and antistatic agents, foam-reducing agents and foaming agents;
- polyols and polyurethane insulations;
- specialised chemical compounds in the field of phosphorus chemistry (flame retardants, stabilisers, superplasticisers, base oils, functional fluids, etc.);
- other products, raw materials and chemical formulations from producers that are not part of the PCC Group.

What stands out in distripark.com's extensive product portfolio is the wide range of raw materials and additives dedicated to the cosmetics industry.

These are chemical compounds of natural and synthetic origin that constitute the base components and additives in the production of personal care products, such as, for example: liquid soaps, shower gels and lotions, shampoos, bath lotions, intimate hygiene products, shaving foams. and many other.

Also, distripark.com offers its customers ingredients and additives for colour and white cosmetics.

In addition to raw materials and additives for the cosmetics industry, distripark.com has a wide range of products targeted at other industries. These are mainly components, reagents and additives intended for the production of industrial mixtures or the production of finished goods.

WHO ARE OUR CUSTOMERS?

The distripark.com chemical raw materials warehouse is a platform dedicated mainly to entrepreneurs operating in the production and service sector, regardless of the scale of their operations. Distripark.com's customers are companies that value partnership terms of cooperation, favourable prices and high quality, as well as efficient adjustment of the offer to the needs of its recipients.

The distripark.com chemical wholesaler builds its value through a collection of benefits resulting from analysing customer needs. So these are not random benefits. At distripark.com, every customer will be treated with an individual approach, if only that's what they need.

It is worth remembering that the distripark.com wholesaler closely cooperates with experts from the PCC Group companies, who help in the process of selecting products for specific applications, provide information on the physico-chemical properties of substances or share their experience in the use of specific raw materials in various industrial formulations.

If you like the benefits offered by the ditripark.com chemical wholesaler, add them to your cart!

Hope to meet you there!

Buy now at

www.distripark.com

Vegan and vegetarian cosmetics

- fashionable, healthy and ecological.

The wealth of raw materials, ingredients and additives in the production of cosmetics might at times make people with vegan or vegetarian preferences a bit confused.

The **wealth of raw materials**, ingredients and additives in the production of cosmetics might at times make people with **vegan or vegetarian preferences** a bit confused.

The fact is that vegan and vegetarian cosmetic products are very often purchased even by people who are not on a special diet. Why? Because they're both very **safe and, usually, excellent value for money. They consist of perfectly selected ingredients of plant origin, do not contain preservatives and are very well absorbed**. The veggie products offer is already very rich today. Cosmetics manufacturers are eager to develop this type of product lines as the market keeps showing more and more interest in all that's healthy and ecological.

Which cosmetic to choose from among so many options? Does its composition really guarantee that a given product is vegan or vegetarian? **Raw materials used in the production of cosmetics can be of both plant and animal origin.**

Producers of cosmetic products are not required to include information on the origin of ingredients used in cosmetic formulas on the packaging. So how can you be sure that a given product is fully vegan? What's helpful in this case are the markings and logos of certificates confirming that a given cosmetic does not contain raw materials of animal origin or their chemical derivatives. The most well-known international certificates for vegan cosmetics are **Vegan Trademark and V-Label. The Polish one is Znak V (the V Sign)**.

What is the difference between vegan and vegetarian cosmetics?

Vegan cosmetic products

Cosmetics produced for vegans must not contain any ingredients of animal origin or even derivatives of such. It should be remembered that both white and colour cosmetics as well as personal care products often contain substances of animal origin. Creams, balms, masks and lipsticks are often made with the use of milk, beeswax, animal fats or animal pigments.

However, the use of these ingredients in cosmetic formulas is not essential. They can be replaced with substances of plant origin with the same effect, maintaining the same – or even better – caring, nourishing and beautifying properties.

Vegan cosmetics not only do not contain animal ingredients or their derivatives, but are also often based on what's best for our skin – natural plant and herbal extracts and minerals. This is the case in both skin care cosmetics and colour makeup cosmetics. In the production of vegan cosmetics, ingredients such as, for example, honey, milk, bee putty or vitamin preparations obtained from animals are prohibited.

To sum up, vegan cosmetic products must consist of natural extracts of flowers, herbs, vegetables, fruits and essential oils only. When making them, only plant or mineral extracts that are obtained in accordance with vegan principles can be used – that is, without violating the rights of animals to freedom and life in the natural environment, and with respect for their dignity.

Vegetarian cosmetics

Vegetarian cosmetics are products that do not contain ingredients of animal origin. In the process of their production, no animal can be harmed or exploited, either directly or indirectly (e.g. through water or soil contamination).

Veggie cosmetics are now very popular with people who need to eliminate various ingredients and products made from animals due to their diet and lifestyle. They are often very good products that are not tested on animals but whose quality exceeds that of a number of cosmetic products available at the chemist's. They have perfect compositions and are very effective.

Veggie and vegan cosmetics usually have appropriate markings on their packaging. Sometimes, however, it is worth carefully analysing their composition. What's good for a vegetarian (e.g. cosmetics with beeswax) won't necessarily work for a vegan. Different people also have a different level of tolerance to certain natural-origin ingredients that can cause allergies or sensitivities.

Cruelty free – products not tested on animals

Another important condition that cosmetics must meet in order to be considered fully vegan or vegetarian is **no testing on animals.**

Cosmetics for vegans contain components whose production hasn't caused any suffering to animals at any stage. This applies to ready-to--use cosmetic products as well as to all the ingredients and additives in them.

Thanks to vegan products, we know **that taking care of one's health, appearance and hygiene does not require the use of animal products in any possible form.** This applies to virtually all types of cosmetics – from body and face care, through colour cosmetics, to personal care products or hairdressing preparations for dyeing and styling hair.

On 11th March 2013, the European Union introduced a total ban on animal testing of cosmetic products and their ingredients. This means that outside the EU, we should pay close attention to the labels on cosmetics that interest us. **Markings such as Leaping Bunny Seal, Vegan Flower, Natrue Seal, Ecocert, Ecocert Cosmos, or PETA are all certificates that confirm, among other things, that the product has not been tested on animals.**

However, products that were tested before 11th March 2013 are still authorised for sale in the EU. Quite a number of different ingredients that make up cosmetics available on the market are also subject to the guidelines of the REACH Regulation, and these can still be tested on animals. These ingredients, in addition to being used in cosmetics, are also used in the production of medicines and detergents.

Are vegan or vegetarian products less effective than traditional ones?

Nothing could be further from the truth! The opinion that vegan or vegetarian cosmetics are less effective is a myth. The components of these products are selected and tested with great care. As a rule, they show a much better care effect than traditional products found at the chemist's.

Veg products effectively eliminate skin irritations. They do great at moisturising and restoring skin freshness and glow. Colour cosmetics from the vegan range make perfect makeup without any skin damage – and, more importantly, without animal cruelty – possible. Vegan and vegetarian cosmetics are full of specially selected and tested gifts of nature.

Examples of cosmetic ingredients of animal origin and their vegan alternatives.

Cholesterol – a substance obtained from animal fat. Its plant-based counterpart is sterol, which can be obtained, for example, from soybeans.

Civet – a secretion obtained from the glands of a small mammal from Africa and Asia. Civet is very popular as a fragrance in perfume production since its smell is very similar to that of musk. In this case, labdanum oil may be an alternative.

Cysteine – a substance obtained from keratin obtained from animal horns and hair. Alternative cysteine-rich sources include, for example, walnuts and sunflower seeds.

Chitin, chitosan – natural thickeners used in hair fixatives. They come from the outer skeleton of insects and crustaceans. Their plant substitutes are locust bean gum or xanthan gum.

Elastin – a protein substance obtained from the tendons in the neck of cattle. It has a nourishing, elasticising and firming effect. Its plant-based alternative is wheat or soy protein.

Glycerine – a substance obtained from beef tallow. It has moisturising and oiling properties, which makes it excellent for creams, lotions and other white cosmetics. A very good glycerine substitute is vegetable glycerine, which is obtained in the process of saponification of vegetable oils and fats.

Guanine – a pigment used in the production of colour cosmetics (eye shadows, nail varnishes, powders, lipsticks). It's extracted from fish scales. Its plant alternative can be mica.

Silk – a valuable raw material produced by silkworms. It's used not only in the production of cosmetics, but also in the textile industry and medicine. Silk proteins or silk threads are used mainly as ingredients in creams and hair care preparations. For example, aloe, mica or plant hyaluronic acid can be used as a silk replacement.

Carmine (E120) – a popular red pigment used in colour cosmetics (lipsticks, eye shadows). It's obtained from bugs – the cochineal. The source of natural plant pigments can be beets, sea buckthorn, onion husks, blueberries, elderberry, buckthorn bark and many others. Plant pigments are anthocyanins or anthocyanosides, and they are flavonoids. They have different shades of red, blue and purple. They are of glycoside nature, i.e. They consist of sugar parts most often derived from glucose, and less frequently from: galactose, xylose, rhamnose and arabinose. The colour of anthocyanins depends on the ph of the environment they are in. At a ph below 7 (acidic), they are red, and at a neutral or alkaline ph (ph > 7) – blue or purple.

Keratin – a substance obtained from hooves, horns, feathers and sheep's wool. Thanks to keratin in hair care products, hair becomes shiny, elastic and smooth. The substance also has a strengthening effect. In vegan cosmetics, keratin can be replaced with soy proteins.

Collagen – a protein substance of animal origin, used in the production of many cosmetic preparations. It

ensures smoothness, elasticity, tightness and hydration of the skin. The source of collagen are products of animal origin: beef, pork, fish, squid and octopus. It can be obtained from animal bones, skins, and tendons. In vegan cosmetics, instead of collagen, the so-called phyto collagen obtained from marine algae is used.

Hyaluronic acid – a chemical compound that occurs naturally in the human body in the form of sodium salt (sodium hyaluronate). In the past, hyaluronic acid was obtained from animal tissues – shark skin, cattle eyeballs and rooster combs. Nowadays, the main source of sodium hyaluronate are strains of bacteria of the Streptococcus equi genus, and the process of its production takes advantage of microbial fermentation.

Stearic acid – an organic substance that belongs to saturated fatty acids. It is a component of stearin. It is used as the basic ingredient in various ointments and creams. Stearic acid is obtained from pig stomachs. Its plant-based alternative is stearic acid derived from vegetable fats, such as coconut or palm oil.

Lanolin – a popular substance derived from the secretion of sheep's sebaceous glands. It is used in the production of white cosmetics, where it acts as an emollient and emulsifier. A vegetable substitute for lanolin are vegetable fats.

Lecithin – a product of animal origin obtained from the nervous tissue of animals or eggs. It has very good nutritional and strengthening properties. Plant-based lecithin is obtained from soybeans and sunflower seeds.

Royal jelly – it is produced in the glands of worker bees. It is the main food of the queen bee. It is the main food of the queen bee. It has a nourishing and smoothing effect, which makes it used in the production of care cosmetics (creams, body lotions). A vegan substitute for royal jelly can be comfrey or aloe extract.

Propolis (bee putty) – a substance popular in cosmetics and pharmaceuticals, produced by bees' wax glands. It has very good antibacterial properties. Plant alternatives to propolis are liquorice root or witch-hazel extract.

Shellac – a specific resin secreted by insects. It has excellent lustering properties. Shellac is used in the production of hair sprays and nail varnishes. Plant-based alternatives to shellac are plant waxes and mica.

Vitamin A – beneficial for the skin, it is derived from fish liver, butter or egg yolk. Perfect for anti-wrinkle creams, vitamin A can be produced synthetically or obtained from carrots, apricots or lemongrass.

Beeswax – a natural substance with excellent moisturising, nourishing and elasticising properties. As an ingredient of creams and lotions, it facilitates their application and absorption. Plant-based alternatives to beeswax are e.g. Carnauba wax, candelilla wax, coconut oil or avocado oil.

THE PCC GROUP and the veggie trend.

There are many cosmetic raw materials of animal origin and their substitutes available on the market. It is impossible to list all of them, but it is worth getting acquainted with the offer of a manufacturer that provides the cosmetics industry with a range of the highest-quality veggie ingredients and additives for cosmetics. For example, such products as those from the Rokamin (Coco Betaine) or Rosulfan (Ammonium Lauryl Sulphate) groups offered by PCC EXOL SA. Both these product groups are based on natural ingredients of plant origin. They are ecological, animal cruelty-free and skin-friendly products. They do not contain allergens or nanomaterials. Rokamin and Rosulfan are two groups of surfactants that are perfect as ingredients in the following finished products:

- Cosmetics and detergents;
- Shampoos and colouring shampoos;
- Hair conditioners;
- Shaving foams;
- Bath lotions;
- Shower lotions and gels;
- Liquid soaps;
- Intimate hygiene preparations;
- Face washes;
- Micellar fluids;
- Oral hygiene preparations.

Beata Gruś
Marketing Department
PCC Group

For more products of the PCC Group, please visit the website: **www.products.pcc.eu**

Tattoo chemistry

The word tattoo (tatau) comes from Polynesia and means a mark, a painting.

The history of tattooing is very long and goes back over 4,000 years. Already at the beginning of our civilisation, people decorated the skin with various dyes, thanks to which patterns – initially related to rituals – were created.

The first surviving tattoos, composed of points and lines, were discovered in Egypt. They were found on the mummified body of an Egyptian priestess of Hathor. They are dated to 2200 BCE. Ötzi – a man who died around 3300 BCE, whose mummified body was found in 1991 in South Tyrol, had as many as 61 tattoos on his body.

Tattoos have been a popular form of body decoration for centuries. Currently, at least 12% of Europeans have them. In the 18–35 age group, even twice as many people may have one. In Germany, already 16 million people are tattooed, and in the US, about 25-30% of people between the ages of 18 and 50 have ink on their body.

Tattoo and permanent makeup durability

A tattoo is made by penetrating the outer layer of the skin with a needle and injecting ink under the skin to create a given pattern. The outermost layer of the skin (epidermis) regenerates continuously, so **the durability of the tattoo is achieved by injecting the ink into the second, inner layer of the skin, i.e. the dermis.**

Permanent makeup is similar to a tattoo and is used to **create patterns that resemble classic makeup.** It is commonly used to highlight the eyes or improve the colours of the face, lips, eyebrows and eyelids.

Skin-colouring inks – past and present

In the old days, the pigments used to make tattoo inks were derived from mineral and geological sources. To give an example, **black** ink used to be obtained from **soot (coal) and iron oxide. Red**, on the other hand, was obtained by using a **mercury sulphide compound (cinnabar)**. **Cadmium compounds** were used to create other **shades of red, orange and yellow.**

Today, pigments used in tattoo inks are based on **organic and partly mineral components.** 80% of pigments are usually carbon-based, of which as much as 60% are azo (synthetic) dyes.

What are tattoo inks made of?

Tattoo inks consist of two basic elements: **the carrier and the colour.**

The carrier is a substance that carries the pigment under the skin. The carrier may include isopropyl alcohol, water, witch-hazel, or glycerine.

The **colour is usually an ordinary pigment (a substance that gives colour to another, transparent substance)**. Pigments are safer than dyes since they don't need a chemical reaction to adhere to the skin and colour it right. Other dyes need additional physical or chemical action to produce the desired colour pattern on the skin.

Inks also contain other chemical compounds, including surfactants (surface-active agents). A wide range of this type of raw materials can be provided directly by **surfactant producers, one of which is the PCC GROUP.**

Before buying, it is also worth carefully analysing the information about the products, checking their properties and verifying the technical documentation, for you are dealing here with inks, i.e. substances that can affect human health and life. As for the PCC GROUP's surfactants, all the above can be done at **www.products.pcc.eu.**

Other ingredients in tattoo inks are **binders, fillers and preservatives.** Many of these additives are used to keep the ink homogeneous and prevent the growth of microorganisms.

Tattoo and permanent makeup inks can be classified as **preparations consisting of water-insoluble pigments** (nanometer/micrometer-sized particles) and auxiliary substances such as solvents, emulsifiers or preservatives.

A typical ink used in tattoo and permanent makeup treatments contains:

- pigments and other dyes (usually powder)
- water,
- preservatives
- **surface-active agents (surfactants): emulsifiers, wetting agents, viscosity regulators,**
- solvents,
- binding substances.

Composition of dyes

Dyes include compounds such as: TiO2 (titanium dioxide), BaSO4 (barium sulphate), Fe3O4 (iron oxide, magnetite), FeO (iron oxide), HgS (mercury sulphide) or CdSe (cadmium selenide).

The organic compounds found in tattooing inks **are classified into azo compounds and polycyclic compounds**. Azo dyes can break down in the body and form amines, which are harmful to health.

The dyes used in inks are very often **contaminated with heavy metals such as cadmium, lead, arsenic or mercury.** In addition to heavy metals, dyes can also contain nanoparticles, phthalates and hydrocarbons.

Can a tattoo be harmful to health?

Tattoo and permanent makeup inks are a mixture of several chemical compounds. **They may contain hazardous substances** that cause skin allergies and other body reactions that have a more serious impact on human life and health.

Following a regulation by the European Commission, **many tattoo ink components have been declared illegal in EU countries. The so-called Tattoo-REACH regulation entered into force on 4th January 2022.**

Therefore, tattoo lovers should use the services of professional salons where only inks approved for use in the European Union are used.

BODY MARBLING – an alternative to a tattoo?

Body marbling can undoubtedly be a very good alternative to tattooing. What is this method of body decoration about?

Body marbling is a trend that has become popular at festivals and other music events. It is quite an original way of decorating the body that has been known in China for centuries. What exactly is it about? A tall vessel is filled with water, acrylic paint and special compounds, i.e. surfactants.

Acrylic paint is safe for the skin, and surfactants are substances that reduce the surface tension between liquids. It is thanks to these compounds that the paint rises to the surface of the water. Using different colours, patterns are created and then applied to the skin.

How to do body marbling?

After thoroughly cleansing the skin of sebum and other cosmetics, dip the selected part of the body in a vessel containing a solution of water and salt, and then slowly take it out after a moment. In this way, the paint floating on the water surface will settle on the skin. Body marbling can be done on the arm, face, legs or other parts of the body that can be immersed in the solution covered with the special paint. Remember to dry the skin thoroughly with a blower.

Body marbling uses different types of paint. Fluorescent paints or brightly coloured ones give great effects. All of them are completely safe, they do not cause any irritation, and after drying, they last for one day. They can be removed quickly with soapy water, a paper towel or a make-up remover.

A similar method is used in nail art. Nail marbling involves pouring coloured nail polishes onto the surface of the water. Nail edges are secured with a silicone barrier or a piece of adhesive tape to avoid tedious cleaning afterwards. The nails are then dipped one at a time in water with varnishes. When the nail gets dry, it's covered with a clear varnish, a conditioner or a top coat.

Tattoo-related fun facts:

- There is a man who has almost 100% of his body covered with tattoos! His name is Lucky Diamond Rich (born in 1971).
- In the 18th century, the traveller James Cook went to Tahiti, from where he brought to Europe one of the island's inhabitants. His body was covered with various drawings from head to toes. It was after this that Europeans began to be interested in tattoos.
- The world's first electric tattoo machine was created in 1891 by an American – O. Riley.
- Popular today, dragon tattoos were originally used in Eastern cultures and traditions. It is believed that such designs depicted people to defend themselves against evil sea forces and monsters.
- Some brands use tattoos as advertising. Billy Gibby has over twenty advert tattoos on his body.
- George Ranger (USA) collects on his body tattoos depicting Disney characters. He has the Little Mermaid on his stomach, Aladdin on his back, and in the groin – 101 Dalmatians. In total, there are 500 such characters on his body.
- Albert Einstein, Nicholas II (a sword, a dragon and the name of his wife), Joseph Stalin, Catherine II and Peter I all had tattoos.
- The most spectacular and most expensive tattoo in the world is a pattern made of real diamonds! It took 612 diamonds of 5 carats each to make it. The cost of such a tattoo is $324,000.

Beata Gruś
Marketing Department
PCC Group

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The Company Brass Band

Calypso Cafe, 1971

The company Brass Band played a significant part in the cultural and social life of the Zakłady Chemiczne chemical plant and the city of Brzeg Dolny. For over 50 years, the band performed at celebrations, demonstrations and state ceremonies. It attracted a large group of talented "musicians, amateur performers and moonlighters" who devoted their free time to rehearsals and performances, but not only.

Band members' names can be found in different concert bands of Brzeg Dolny that provided musical setting for weddings and carnival parties. The list of entertainers included Jan Czykiel (Metrum, Relax) and Tadeusz Czarnota (Relax) as well as the members of the "Jamborsky Band" – Ryszard Stępniewski and Zdzisław Jamborski, who performed at the "Pod Papą" community centre. Before that, the bandmaster, Marian Sozański, together with the band's musicians had founded the "Big Band Jazzowy" (the Jazz Big Band), which, come Saturday – and in summertime also Thursday – played at the "Calypso" cafe. Taking advantage of this opportunity, a few words about the cafe itself. Opened in the community centre in the late 1950s, at the beginning, it operated for four hours in the afternoon. At the tables, you could have a coffee and something sweet (cream pies from the Bujacz confectionery). In its everyday life, it offered recorded music only.

There was no vodka, but the famous imported Mistella wine was served. It was a top shelf product, compared to the national richly sulphur-enriched plonk. The purpose of this wine-like product, commonly known as jabol, alpaga or bełt (all different names for cheap Polish fruit wine), was to simply get drunk on a budget, and there was no way something like that could take place in a decent cafe. To enter the cafe, you had to dress appropriately – not that you needed a bow tie, but you had to look neat and tidy.

Someone might say those times are long gone. Fortunately, Jerzy Fichtel's album contains photos that allow us to see, or even feel, the music-filled atmosphere. Taken in the 1960s, the first photo shows it all. The venue – that is, the Plant's Cultural Centre (Zakładowy Dom Kultury – ZDK); the sponsor's logo – Rokita; and of course the band itself, from the left: Eugeniusz Kiliański (trumpet), Tolek Jezierski (drums), Władysław Kot (tenor saxophone), Protazy Majewicz and Marian Sozański (alto saxophones) and his daughter Barbara on the piano.

In the second, very chamber photo taken at the Calypso cafe, Eugeniusz Kiliański plays the trumpet, Władysław Kot – tenor saxophone, and on alto saxophones – Protazy Majewicz and Marian Sozański (bandmaster).

The line-up of the band changed many times over the years. Members came and went, replaced by others, for example, Stefan Naszyński or the aforementioned Jerzy Fichtel (vocals). In late 1960s, after the departure of B. and M. Sozański, the band was taken over by Czesław Orłowski. At the time, the band's line-up included also his sons Henryk Orłowski (organ and accordion) and Zdzisław (sax and clarinet).

Calypso Cafe, 1971


ZAKŁADOWY DOM KULTURY
PRZY NADODRZAŃSKICH ZAKŁADACH PRZEMYSŁU ORGANICZNEGO
„ROKITA"
w BRZEGU DOLNYM, ul. KOLEJOWA 29, woj. WROCŁAW
telefony: Brzeg Dolny 52, Wrocław 66-26, wewnętrzny 309
KINO ZWIĄZKOWE „ODRA"
ZWIĄZKOWA KAWIARNIA - DANSING „CALYPSO"
Brzeg Dolny dnia 25.IV.1961

ZAKŁADOWY DOM KULTURY
PRZY NADODRZAŃSKICH ZAKŁADACH PRZEMYSŁU ORGANICZNEGO
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KINO ZWIĄZKOWE „ODRA"
ZWIĄZKOWA KAWIARNIA - DANSING „CALYPSO"
Brzeg D-lny dn.22.I.61

Headline of a company letter from the community centre, 1961

"Seems like nothing, and this is how it started,
Seems like nothing, not more than "bam bam bam."
Brass bands have a certain power
and that's how it went:
Granny stood on the balcony,
as granddad paraded below..."

sang Halina Kunicka at the 1970 Sopot Festival in the "Brass Bands" song.
And how did it start for us?

The beginnings of the Company Brass Band go back to 1947, when a handful of music-making enthusiasts caused the then management of the company and the works council to purchase a set of musical instruments, sheet music and uniforms.

This is yet another example of how life in Brzeg Dolny used to revolve around the plant for years. In the past, the most common were military and mining brass bands as well as those operating at the Volunteer Fire Department stations, constituting a source of income for firefighters for their statutory activities.

On 1st May 1947, the brass band took part in the May Day march. Since then, under the baton of the then bandmaster Jerzy Borowski, it systematically increased its line-up and raised its artistic standard. A particularly distinguished pioneer of this period was Józef Niepla, the clarinettist.

After a few years, the bandmaster Jerzy Borowski gave way to bandmaster Franciszek Bialic, and the company brass band diversified its repertoire. As a result, the repertoire performed at the 25th anniversary included 27 pieces and was successively enlarged with new ones.

After years of the company band having been led by brothers Czesław and Stefan Istelski, and then by H. Zasadzki and J. Żurek, the role of bandmaster went to Marian Sozański. Under his leadership, in the 1959-1969, the band developed greatly, and intensified work, especially with young people, brought the desired results.

There were even two company brass bands: one for seniors and another for youngsters. Students of the company-affiliated school and the Technical School of Chemistry were eager to make music.

In 1969, after Mr Sozański left to work in Germany, the band was taken over by bandmaster Józef Głowacz – a musician of the Wrocław Opera, and later Jerzy Mytych. The role of the host – and from 1990 the bandmaster – was held by Zdzisław Jamborski.

We mustn't forget about bandmasters, for their role in the band extended far beyond conducting. They were the organisers and coordinators, but also music teachers,

especially for young students. This is how Szymon Połeć remembers it: "The notes during music lessons in Primary School No. 5 were all Chinese to me. It took no more than five minutes for Mr Zdzisław (Jamborski) to explain what it's all about to me. Literally."

When it comes to organisational difficulties, let us just mention two instances as remembered by Zdzisław Jamborski. "Once, we were on our way to give a concert when, somewhere around Uraz, we were forced to go back to Brzeg Dolny because one of the musicians had forgotten his tuba. Another time, the drummer failed to arrive to a concert in Wińsko so one of the musicians had to fill in for him."

It was hard to imagine any truly important celebration in the region without the band's performance. They were also known to other companies, they gave concerts in different provinces and won in numerous competitions.

The band's artistic output is considerable, of which the following absolutely have to be mentioned: recording of a radio programme together with the soloist, baritone singer of the Wrocław Opera – Tadeusz Prochowski; successful participation in the brass band competition in Dzierżoniów in 1969, where the company brass band received the "A" category and was included among the best brass bands in the Wrocław Province.

Brass bands are divided into concert and marching ones. Our band was rather universal. The photo provided by Marcin Fichtel shows the band in its marching version at the Provincial Youth Athletic Meet in 1969 at the Warzyń I estate, Aleje Jerozolimskie street, near the post office. Leading the band is Bandmaster of the Company Brass Band, Mr Marian Sozański, and in the first row: clarinets – Mr Orłowski and Mr Kot, trumpets – Mr Sobczyk, Mr Kiliański and Mr Kopeć.

Of course, the programme of Rokita's 25th anniversary would not have been complete without commemorative performances of the Company Band. The 1971 photo shows an open-air concert. First from the left, on the clarinet, Władysław Kot – a benzene sulfonation foreman by profession.

In the year of its jubilee, the Company Brass Band of NZPO "Rokita" consisted of 32 people, including the aforementioned Wrocław Opera baritone. He sang at the jubilee concert at the Plant's Cultural Centre on 25th June 1972. The group photo from Jerzy Fichtel's album presents all of the band's musicians from that period.

The 25th anniversary concert started with the "March of Chemists," followed by the polonaise "Standard-bearer," a bunch of highlander songs and dances, Stanisław Moniuszko's "Cracovienne" in a baritone, and finished with "My Princess" overture.

In the times of the Polish People's Republic, May Day celebrations were quite formal. The programme included the obligatory May Day parade, where representatives of schools and workplaces, carrying banners, marched before a VIP grandstand filled with local notables. No wonder that the brass band concerts were also used to add splendour to the Labour Day celebrations. Particularly interesting was the band's 1976 concert at the city stadium. It began with the song "Asturia" sung by Dorota Cupiał in a duet with Piotr Nadworny – an in-

Provincial Youth Athletic Meet, 1969

Rokita's 25th anniversary, outdoor concert, 1971

teresting combination of child vocals and wind instruments. A few words about the song itself. It is a Spanish patriotic folk song with a universal message. Boys sang it to their black-haired girls, and Mieczysław Fogg sang it on a railway platform to say goodbye to soldiers departing to the front in 1939.

The band used to perform public concerts on the Chemist's Day. On 3rd June 1979, one such concert took place in the park behind the "Piast" hotel. But that wasn't the only time, the band would often give concerts there.

Particularly festive was the concert on 6th June 1981, which took place at the "Rokita" Sports Club's stadium. It was then that, during the mass, on the occasion of the Chemist's Day, the Banner of NSZZ "S" NZPO Organika-Rokita was blessed.

On the day of the 50th anniversary, the band's line-up was particularly fine. As part of the celebrations, on 23rd May 1997, the band gave a gala concert at the Cultural Centre in Dolny Brzeg. Times had changed, the repertoire had changed over the years, and so the programme of the jubilee concert included a bunch of Beatles' standards or the famous Georgia (on My Mind). There are fragments of the concert recorded on VHS tape as well as many photos available on Facebook in the Company Brass Band's album.

50th anniversary of the Company Brass Band, 1997

Concert at the Cultural Centre in Brzeg Dolny on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Company Brass Band, 1997

Good wishes from the Management Board of Rokita SA were passed on to the bandmaster by Chief Marketing Specialist, Roman Bajda. After the concert, in the Cafe Room of the Cultural Centre in Brzeg Dolny, a party was held for the then current and retired band members. On that evening, at one table sat to reminisce, among others, Z. Jamborski and his teacher, former bandmaster, M. Sozański.

In the 1970s, it was very difficult to join the band. Over time, the situation reversed, and so in the 1990s there were fewer and fewer new people willing to devote their private time to rehearsals and giving concerts. Rehearsals took place twice a week and lasted about three hours each. Before that, there was time to teach young people holding the status of the band's student. Rehearsals took place in the Cultural Centre in Brzeg Dolny in the present Session Room, which is where the City Council meets.

One of the many such students was Alfred Uran, who was twelve when he started in the Company Brass Band. He performed for almost 30 years until the very end of the band's existence with just one short break for military service. He also tried his hand outside the band when he and his friend Grabowski founded the "Karawana" band.

In the year of the 50th anniversary, the band consisted of 27 people. It is all the more worth recalling the full line-up of the Zakłady Chemiczne "Rokita" SA chemical plant's brass band: Tadeusz Kopeć – tenor saxophone, Marek Kopeć – cornet, Jarosław Kopeć – baritone saxophone, Piotr Kopeć – saxophone, Alfred Uran – clarinet, Łukasz Uran – clarinet, Zbigniew Kwaśniak – bass, Andrzej Lech – trombone, Agnieszka Józefowicz – clarinet, Zbigniew Samojedny – tenor saxophone, Ryszard Szatrowski – tenor, Adam Semczuk – baritone, Krzysztof Ochmański – tenor, Edward Szydełko – trumpet, Wojciech Adamski – trumpet, Krzysztof Motecki – bass guitar, Jarosław Jędryczko – alto, Arkadiusz Tracz – clarinet, Marcin Rajzer – tenor, Dariusz Wyka – trombone, Andrzej Król – alto saxophone, Marek Horbacewicz – cornet, Mariusz Nowacki – drums, Wojciech Matysek – alto, Katarzyna Somiak – clarinet, Tomasz Jamborski – cornet, and Zdzisław Jamborski – bandmaster.

Every jubilee – and the fiftieth anniversary especially – should include an award and decoration ceremony to appreciate individual achievements and merits. And it did in this case too. At the jubilee ceremony, the Main Board of the Polish Association of Choirs and Orchestras awarded the most distinguished artists of the band with gold, silver and bronze medals. Gold medals were awarded to: Zdzisław Jamborski, Artur Samojedny, Władysław Kot, Zbigniew Kwaśniak, Tadeusz Kopeć and Edward Kwaśniak. Silver badges went to: Edward Szydełko, Ryszard Szatrowski, Andrzej Lech, Krzysztof Motecki, Zbigniew Samojedny, Adam Semczuk and Andrzej Król. Brown medals were awarded to: Marek Kopeć, Wojciech Adamski, Jarosław Ję-

Concert at the market square in Wołów

Corpus Christi, Szczepanów

dryczko and Krzysztof Ochmański.

In addition, the vice president of the Board of the Lower Silesian Branch of the Polish Association of Choirs and Orchestras, Mr Tadeusz Mroczek presented the entire band with an Honorary Golden Badge and honoured Tomasz Jamborski with a diploma for outstanding social work in the amateur music movement.

A few days later, on 28th May 1997, the band accompanied Michael Jackson during his visit to the monastery in Lubiąż. After a white government helicopter had landed on the school playground, the band performed "Szła dzieweczka do laseczka," and "Glory, Glory Hallelujah" was played as Jackson made his way through the crowd of fans. An undoubtedly right choice, as it certainly helped the artist to happily reach the monastery. The local police forces that undertook to guard the event were a bit surprised by the scale of crowd pressure built up by all those fans ready to do anything to get an autograph or at least touch the artist. To give a bit of an excuse, please note that in those times the artists and the public at concerts were not separated by any kind of barriers or zones access to which was controlled by security guards.

During performances given at the stadium, the musicians of the Company Brass Band could be listened to and watched from a very close distance. The band gave concerts while marching through the city's streets, not afraid of dissatisfied fans throwing rotten tomatoes at them. The musicians' skill and artistic level were a sufficient defence.

Of special character was the time when the Company Band played for the Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity. On Sunday, 4th January 1998 at 2:00 pm in the sports hall of the Rokita Hotel and Sports Complex, the band opened the 6th Great Final of the Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity by playing its anthem. By the way, let us remind you that Brzeg Dolny has been with the Great Orchestra from the very beginning. Events co-organised by the Brzeg Dolny Cultural Centre have been supported by the Zakłady Chemiczne chemical plant through sponsoring, among other things, the traditional fireworks. Also, in 1998, the band received a distinction in the Provincial Review of Amateur Orchestras.

The end of the 90s was very difficult for the plant as well as for its employees and the band. A new structure based on the Production and Trade Complexes was implemented. Drastic cost cuts in non-production areas also affected the band, leading to the end of its activity, for in the first place you have to have some instruments to play, and the ones they had at the time were already very worn out.

Later on, the musicians would meet at garage rehearsals, and some of them joined the ranks of the Trzebnica Brass Band. As a result, the instruments were saved from rusting and the musicians kept playing.

The Band's jubilee, 1972

Perhaps with a slightly reduced line-up and not as the company band anymore, but still. Particularly welcoming was Szczepanów, where they played during the Corpus Christi processions. The route went across the bridge in Lubiąż. Later, it became much shorter – going across the new road bridge in Brzeg Dolny, officially opened on 28th October 2013. The musicians also visited the church in Oborniki Śląskie several times.

The date of 23rd June 2019 is a symbolic end of their activity, for that is when Zdzisław Jamborski – the last bandmaster of the Company Brass Band as well as Brzeg Dolny's distinguished cultural activist and teacher to many generations of musicians in our city – passed away.

In the past the band gathered to provide an exceptionally solemn setting for funerals of the plant employees. Funeral processions used to travel the way from the church to the cemetery on foot. These days, funeral ceremonies look a bit different. The musicians, however, accompanied their bandmaster on his last journey. During the funeral mass in the Church of Our Lady Queen of Poland, largely thanks to the efforts of Grzegorz Samojedny, a folk band from Mojęcice sang to the band's accompaniment. About twenty musicians were there at the cemetery. Two marches were played by the Wrocław orchestra, the rest – by those from Trzebnica and Brzeg Dolny.

And one more verse from Halina Kunicka's song. The story of the band from this song, despite its lively, even happy melody (in a march rhythm), doesn't have a happy ending either.

"Seems like nothing, and this is how it started,
Seems like nothing, not more than "bam bam bam."
Brass bands have a certain power
but there's none around today!"

The band's story was chronicled by Zbigniew Kwaśniak.

Marek Wielowski
Specialist
PCC Rokita

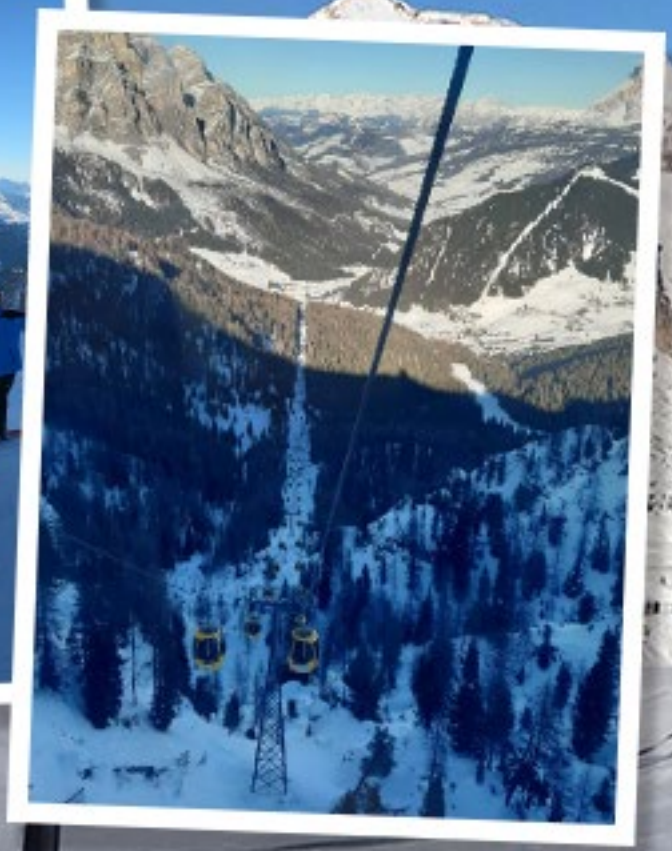
Sellaronda

Europe's most beautiful ski tour

Winter madness is in our blood, and our children, it would seem, came into this world wearing skis already. This year, in a way, the situation made the choice for us... we were supposed to go in December to the Austrian Hermagor, but shortly before, we changed the destination to the Italian Zoldo ... Of course, modifying our plans just few days before departure was not easy, and the kids kept us in suspense until the very last moment... but we made it, we've got green light, we're all positively negative – we're going...

We all use the first few days of skiing to warm up, younger kids try to remember how to ski, and we... enjoy the moment, the sun, the views and delicious Italian food... Our crew is a friendly, crazy bunch, someone comes up with an idea... let's do Selle – it's a real treat for all skiing and mountain lovers... we're undivided, sensible and thrill-oriented... we'll go, sure, but only if the weather is perfect – that is, when it's sunny, because there's nothing scarier than doing this tour in fog, falling snow and with no visibility – and on any other day than the weekend – because it might get crowded!

We check the weather regularly and.... looks like we're getting a really cloudless,



sunny, beautiful day... here we go! The youngest part of the team, Kacper and Jaś, stay under the ski supervision of – the best and most professional – grandfather, Darek, in Civetta, the rest are planning the route.

The day has come! Wakey-wakey, everyone on time, optimistic moods... let's go! We start by taking the ski lift up to La Marmolada – the highest peak of the Dolomites – 3,343m above sea level in the north-eastern part of Italy. 8:30 – we check in for the first lift up to safely go round the mountain... there're safety rules, certificates, face masks... well, such are the times.

We reach the top!

Gosh, the wind's terrible, but the visibility is perfect, the views are extraordinary, and the peaks peeking out from behind the clouds create an amazing spectacle. Our youngsters feel the height, the older of us are dazzled, we're on the top of the wonderful Dolomites, we take a few photos and go, the way down from the Marmolada is quite demanding... I think to myself, if the rest is also like that, it's gonna be a really intense day... after all, the Sellaronda tour goes through four great ski resorts: Alta Badia, Arraba, Val di Fassa, Val Gardena. There's a large loop and a lot of connected ski lifts and routes ahead of us, and we deliberately choose the route with orange markings / clockwise / out of two possible... because the day is short and the lifts are open until 4:00 pm, we have to be fast – the sun's moving along...

We go from one lift to another and cover kilometre after kilometre of routes of various difficulty levels, each of us has a role, there's the motivator, the navigator, and the optimist... the atmosphere is wonderful, the views are incredible, we're grateful that we can be here together... we feel a bit sorry that the youngest members of our crew can't be with us... but we promise ourselves that in a few years we'll come back and do this beautiful tour all together... we have a wonderfully intense day, covering a total of 70 km skiing, we finish the tour around the charming Sella massif at 3:30 pm. Each of us had to overcome their weaknesses at some stage or another... but I'm sure no one regretted this decision or the time spent on the tour. I highly recommend it! It's really worth it – just look at the photos.