



PRESS RELEASE

Solaris Bus & Coach. 10 years together. Thanks to you!

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The true beginnings of Solaris Bus & Coach can be traced to early 1980s. At that time a young Polish engineer, Krzysztof Olszewski, running his own car repair workshop travelled to West Berlin on business. "It was exactly on

December 9th 1981. I was planning to return on December 14th. However, the martial law declared in Poland the day before my planned return trip caused me to stay in Berlin. After a long saga of problems I finally managed to bring my wife and our two children to Berlin," Krzysztof Olszewski recalls. In January 1982 Krzysztof Olszewski joined Neoplan. Three years later he became a managing director of one of Neoplan plants in Germany.

In the early 1990s Krzysztof Olszewski decided to return to Poland to start sales of Neoplan low-floor buses in Poland. "I got permission of the German owners of the company, but nothing more. In 1994 I opened a Neoplan Poland sales agency in Warsaw and in the same year I sold my first vehicle. It was the first bus of this type in Poland."

Another milestone came in 1995. "I took part in a tender to supply low-floor city buses to the city of Poznań and we won a half of the order, to supply 72 buses. One of the conditions was that the buses had to be built near Poznań. This decided the company's future. With the contract in hand and with 36 employees we started the Neoplan Poland manufacturing plant," Krzysztof Olszewski recalls the event of 10years ago.

After a short period of time the company became the leader on the Polish city bus market.

Another milestone for the company came in 1999. In order to meet the market demand and satisfy customers' requirements the all-new Urbino 12 low-floor city bus was launched, marking the birth of the Solaris brand. - Within just 6 months, with a group of young Polish engineers we designed and engineered an all-new vehicle, a Solaris Urbino low-floor bus," says Krzysztof Olszewski. The new bus was launched in May 1999 at the Poznań Motor Show. The new bus was a hit and in a short time it became a sales success in Poland. A year later it was offered in export markets. The first export order came for a Solaris Urbino 15 from the Czech city of Ostrava.

1st September of 2001 marks the cornerstone in the history of the company. That day, following the buy-out by Krzysztof Olszewski of the 30 per cent shareholding held for a year by Neoplan, the company was renamed Solaris Bus & Coach Limited. As of July 1st, 2005 Solaris Bus & Coach has been trading as a share company.

Today the Solaris product portfolio comprises the third-generation of the Solaris Urbino low-floor city buses, with the lengths of 10, 12, 15 and 18 metres, available with diesel or CNG power, the Solaris Trollino 12, 15 and 18 trolley bus range, plus a family of Solaris Vacanza 12 and 13 tourist coaches. Solaris also builds specialist vehicles to order, such as mobile blood-collection units based on a tourist coach.

Currently the company employs in excess of 1000 people. Nearly 80% of the entire Solaris production is exported. During the 10 years in operation the company has attracted over 80 export customers and 64 operators run Solaris buses in Poland. In reality this means that there is not a single municipality in Poland with its own city bus transport that does not have a Solaris bus in its fleet. Outside Poland Solaris buses and coaches can be seen in operation in: Austria, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Latvia, Malta, Norway, Romania, Slovakia, Switzerland and Sweden.

The well-known Solaris logo is "Dachsie", a green dachshund dog devised by Solange Olszewska, Krzysztof Olszewski's wife, who is Solaris Deputy President in charge of Customer Relations. She has supported her husband right from the start. "Being responsible among other things, for the company image, I tried to devise a symbol or a logo that would distinguish our buses from the competitors' products. A green dachshund fits the bill perfectly. It has a long body, just like a bus, it has short legs and is low-slung just like our low-floor buses, it eats little because our buses are very fuel-efficient, it is green because our products are environment-friendly, and, last but not least, it is thoroughly devoted to its master, just like we are completely at our customers' service," explains Solange Olszewska.

The success of the family-run company based in Bolechowo has been acknowledged several times in the shape of various prizes and awards, both home and abroad. 2005 brought a very important recognition to Solange Olszewska, Solaris Bus & Coach S.A. Deputy President, who was presented with the prestigious „Bus Builder of the Year” award at the Busworld international show at Kortrijk in Belgium last October. The award is given to outstanding personalities of the bus industry for the outstanding personal contribution to the growth of the bus industry and the "art of building buses". This shows that the progress made by Solaris is appreciated not only in Poland, but also in Europe.

Solaris Bus & Coach believes in continuous growth and product development. "We are extremely happy and proud that we are able to mark the company's 10th anniversary by opening a brand new manufacturing facility. During this jubilee year we plan further product launches. We do hope that thanks to our customers who have been with us for such a long time, the next decade will be equally successful for Solaris Bus & Coach," said Solange and Krzysztof Olszewscy.

For the period ending in March 2006 a total of over 2500 buses and coaches have left the Solaris Bus & Coach factory. Nearly 1300 units have been delivered to operators across Poland, while the remainder have been exported to customers located in some 80 cities and towns in 15 European markets.

Additional information

Mateusz Figaszewski

E-mobility Development & Market Intelligence Director
Tel.: +48 61 66 72 347
Mobile: +48 601 652 179
Fax: 48 61 66 72 345
email: mateusz.figaszewski@solarisbus.com

About our company

Solaris Bus & Coach sp. z o.o. is one of the leading producers of city and intercity buses in Europe. It focuses in particular on the development of zero-emission vehicles, i. e. electric and hydrogen buses as well as trolleybuses. This has resulted in the widest zero-emission product range in the European market and a leading position in this segment with a market share of 15.2%. Nearly 25,000 Solaris vehicles have been delivered so far and they ply the streets in 850 towns and cities across 33 countries located throughout Europe as well as beyond it. Solaris is part of the Spanish CAF Group (Construcciones y Auxiliar de Ferrocarriles) S.A. From conception, to the design and manufacturing phases, all Solaris buses are produced in Poland. Moreover, all activities undertaken by the manufacturer are in line with the brand's mission, which is reflected in the motto "We are changing the image of public transport". Solaris also actively partners with public transport operators and provides them with comprehensive support in their transition to zero-emission mobility.