



**The center of attention...**  
Apsys' Stephen Pragnell delivers a little welcome speech at the Poland's stand organized by the Polish Council of Shopping Centers.

# One of the Old Boys

The annual showcase of the retail world rolled into Cannes in November, and if nothing else it underlined Poland's growing status as a developed market.

It is rapidly becoming a given law in retail that each year MAPIC gets bigger, and this year was no different. The annual show case for retail space developers, retailers, and high-street innovators in Cannes, was the biggest ever in the event's 12-year-long history.

The 2006 MAPIC, the International Market for Retail Real Estate, set a new record for attendance in all sectors of the market, from property professionals to retailers and local authorities. With 8,000 delegates from 62 countries, compared to 7,200 last year, attendance grew by 12 percent in just twelve months. "The growing number of participants was really visible," says Maciej Kielbicki, managing director Mayland Real Estate, one of the participating companies.

Key markets from around the world significantly increased the size of their presence. Russia

offered a striking example with 73 exhibiting firms compared to 36 last year, a rise of 103 percent, while Germany posted a 48-percent increase in exhibitors with 31 firms, and Spain's exhibition presence was up 39 percent with 52 firms. Newcomers from Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey and India—all countries showing dynamic growth and vitality in the retail real estate sector—added to the flavor.



Another increase this year was the number of retail developers attending: 2,000 participated in 2006, compared with 1,500 last year. Since high-street trading is a key driver of urban renewal, more and more city authorities were trying to showcase their development schemes to retail real estate

**Step this way...**  
A cocktail party organized by Echo Investment on the Poland Stand, attracted a crowd of 200 real estate professionals.

professionals in an effort to attract brand and property projects.

One example of this was the Polish Council of Shopping Centers (PRC) stand, a flagship stand for Poland, and according to the organizers, one of the most popular of all the stands at the fair. Compared with its last year's presence at MAPIC, the stand grew by about 20 percent as more Polish companies attended which consequently translated into a larger number of projects on display. "The stand was full from the opening to the closing," says Stephen Pragnell, PRC's president, and the head of retail space developer, Apsys. "All partners went away well satisfied with both the contacts made and business done during the fair."

Others struck the same upbeat note. "The Polish presence was on the up last year and this year as well," says Ryszard Leśniowski, president of Grupa International, a company set up solely to develop real estate in Poland. "So was there interest in the retail market in Poland," he added.

On the business and social level, the Polish stand offered exiting opportunities. "As ever, the Polish stand part was a highlight of MAPIC and all the Polish participants of MAPIC and met used the stand and its facilities as a central meeting place, which was the initial idea of our presence," Pragnell explained.

Kielbicki was also satisfied by the results. "I am very happy with our presence at MAPIC," he says. "We achieved two of our main goals: reinforcing our company's image and promoting our four projects. We had many meetings during the fair that will soon result in business."

One of the cocktail parties at the Polish Stand, an event that attracted nearly 200 people, was sponsored by Echo Investment, a developer of shopping and entertainment centers. The company organized the party to showcase their new projects, the Arena in Słupsk, Metropolis in Poznań, and Mundo in Budapest.

And it was for the Arena mall that Echo signed a deal with a bowling alley operator during MAPIC. "With a multiplex cinema operator already signed for Arena

