

Snapshot review

Petrol Station 2008, Warsaw 28–30 May

by Nick Needs



The oil companies were exhibiting in force at Poland's annual retail petroleum trade fair. Orlen, Lotos BP, Statoil, and Shell, all had very significant stands aiming to sign up more dealers to their network, or maybe promote the wholesale side of their businesses to an audience that generally would have been pleased to accept some hospitality and a chair, in return for a bit of company spiel.

From talking to BP you do get the feeling that they are in Poland for the long haul, with their high end network of company owned sites, which they say have been cherry picked over the last 15 years, adding that the former state owned sites were mostly bought by Orlen and Lotos. Over 100 BP sites have a Wild Bean Cafe, which is a good indication as to how many of their sites BP considers to be premium outlets.

Lotos, Project Manager of Premium Fuels, Przemyslaw Rybka, talked to me about the company's move towards premium fuels and claimed that their Dynamic Diesel can operate at temperatures of -35 degrees. The Lotos stand looked extremely impressive, sandwiched between Orlen and BP, but as the second largest retailer in Poland, this seemed somewhat appropriate. For the record, Lotos have no COCO sites (company owned, company operated) 133 CODO's (company owned, dealer operated) 80 DOFO's (company owned, Franchise operated) and 100 DODO's (Dealer owned, dealer operated), but they are looking for more. They also have the second biggest refinery in Poland.

Orlen's double decker exhibition stand looked equally impressive and they were busy all day, but the chance to catch a word with erpec delegate and Executive Director of Retail Business, William Kozik, was unfortunately not possible, as three important meetings were taking place on the same day I attended the show and William had to unfortunately send his apologies.

Secu-Tech and Eurotank, were 2 erpec delegates exhibiting under their own steam and not through a local office or a distributor. Dagmar Höckner, Managing Director of Secu-Tech, Security & Electronic Technologies GmbH, said they had had some good interest in their latest product, Multitank, a liquid product identification system, which is electronic tag based and prevents cross filling or misfilling of product grades from the refinery to final delivery on retail sites. Director of Eurotank, Jonathan Coombes, was just pleased to be at the event and said he had some good enquiries for their bio-fuel management services, their tank and line endoscope investigations unit and their tank and pipe cleaning and integrity testing facilities. Miguel Silva, Petrotec's International Sales Director, was also spotted on their distributor's stand, showing off their new range of pumps, which along with Dresser's Global Ovation, were a talking point of the show.

A most interesting element to the Polish show was seeing at least five gambling companies with stands, trying to promote the idea of slot machines in petrol station shops. Not allowed in the UK and not allowed in many countries in Europe, but it certainly is in Poland and I am told the idea started off in Norway in the 1990's. The largest company taking a stand at the show was Europlay, a Polish company run by Managing Director Magdalena Pietrzak, supported by Europlay AS, Managing Director Per Inge, who founded the Europlay brand in Norway. They say it's a license to print money and whilst they did not offer any figures, it is clear that many sites in Poland and Norway for that matter have entertained the idea and it is working well for them. More details at www.europlay.pl

At the front of house, a smile from the registration staff might have made my day even more special, but as it was I returned home pleased with my day's work in Warsaw. A good exhibition and very well organised. NN



The best smile of the day goes to this lady on the Lotos stand.



The competition. BP, Lotos and Orlen all lined up together.



The Europlay team, gambling with the Polish market.



Dagmar Höckner of Secu-Tech demonstrating MULTI TANK.