

Honoured Guests, Valued Customers of BSI, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Firstly, I should apologise for not being with you in person this morning. It had been my intention to fly to Warsaw last night to attend this event but, on the advice of my doctor, I have been told to stay at home for a few days. It is purely a precautionary measure and I hope to be back to full speed again shortly. In the meantime I have asked my colleague Joanna Bankowska to say a few words on my behalf.

I first visited Poland, Gdynia to be precise, in 1988 and have been a regular visitor to the country over the last 20 years. In that time, amongst other business dealings, I have had extensive dealings with the Polish Shipping Industry during my time based in Japan and until recently was a member of the Supervisory Board of Gaspol, Poland's largest LPGas distributor. It is with great pleasure that I am able to continue my personal association with Poland in my new role as CEO of BSI Group.

Over the last two decades the transformation of Poland into a dynamic economy integrated into the European and global business community has been extremely impressive. Equally the willingness with which Polish society has embraced change by importing and exporting the highest quality skills and ideas has made a significant impact beyond your borders. Like the rest of us, you are challenged by the current financial environment but, if there is one thing I have learnt over the years, it is that Poles are fighters and normally come out of a fight even stronger!

One of the keys to success in the current environment is for companies and organisations to continue to improve performance and mitigate risk in a sustainable manner. Not always easy when short-term pressures are often so severe. Yet excellent companies and organisations do this using the standards-based approach promoted by BSI through the adoption of certified processes supported by training for their employees. In my view this should always be seen as an investment to be made, not a cost to be saved. Based on business or policy priorities the current situation forces all of us to focus on what we need to do consistently well to satisfy our customers, comply with rules and regulations, and demonstrate our value to society. Whether it is management of quality, environmental impact, security or continuity, we can all benefit from the adoption of rigorous standards developed and proven in an international arena. Some say it removes competitive disadvantage; I say the opposite. Properly embedded into a business, standards can be incredibly powerful and be a source of real competitive advantage.

There is of course a wonderful affinity between Britain and Poland which has only been strengthened in recent years. I am proud to be celebrating the 10th Anniversary of BSI Poland and we look forward to being of continued service to our customers here in future. We look to expand our team here and increase the range of products and services that we offer. To do this we need your input on key issues that you are facing, the reason why many of the presentations today are from customers of BSI. I will be watching carefully the progress of our business and am committed to making sure we deliver more value in future to the Polish market. Knowing as I do how competitive the market is here in Poland, progressive companies can increasingly benefit I believe from these tools to help them not only survive but also thrive, now and over the longer-term.

I would like to thank all of our speakers who have given of their time today and to give my best wishes to all of our current and, hopefully future, customers who have joined us.

Howard Kerr
Chief Executive
BSI Group