



THE GDYNIA COTTON ASSOCIATION

The idea of establishing an institution to protect the interests of Polish participants in the cotton trade originated in 1934, with entrepreneurs, economic activists, and representatives of local and central authorities as the initiators. At that time, large quantities of cotton were already passing through the port of Gdynia, therefore Gdynia was considered the ideal location for the institution responsible for overseeing the transport, storage, logistics, and quality of this raw material. In 1935, with the strong support of the then Deputy Prime Minister - Minister of Treasury, Industry, and Commerce - Eugeniusz Kwiatkowski, the decision was made to establish the Gdynia Cotton Association.



From the very beginning, the Association sought to obtain the rights to arbitrate American cotton, as it was mainly imported to Europe at that time. Negotiations with ACSA - the American Cotton Shippers Association – were successful, and in September 1938, upon opening of the Cotton House – the Association's headquarters at H. Derdowskiego 7 St., the quality and commercial arbitration of cotton in Gdynia was officially launched.

During World War II, the Association's activities were interrupted, and the Cotton House was annexed by the Germans as a war infectious diseases hospital and later became the headquarters of the Kriegsmarine's financial division. As a result, the building was considered by the Allies as a military facility and during the bombing of the Gdynia port in 1944 it was destroyed in 75%.

After the war, in 1947, the Association was reactivated, under the new Polish name which was added the word "arbitration" thus highlighting its most important function at the time, whereas the English name of the Gdynia Cotton Association was unchanged. It quickly regained its former position. After reconstruction, on 6 June 1948, the Cotton House was reopened, with prominent figures such as Eugeniusz Kwiatkowski - the Government Plenipotentiary for the Reconstruction of the Coast of Poland, Henryk Zakrzewski - the Mayor of Gdynia, Stanisław Zrałek - the Gdańsk Voivode, and the building's architect - Prof. Waclaw Tomaszewski, attending the ceremony.

Without wasting time, the institution began training its own cotton arbitrators from all over the world, and since they proved to be excellent professionals, one of the few manual cotton classification schools was established at the Association, in 1948, the certificates of which are well recognized worldwide.. To these days, 84 courses have been held, training 642 experts from 29 countries, with our graduates working in trading companies, inspection firms, and government agencies involved in cotton production and trade.

Due to the excellent level of arbitration and training, in 1958 the American Cotton Shippers Association (ACSA) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recognized the Gdynia Cotton Association as the signatory of the Universal Cotton Standards Agreement, which became the quality and arbitration model for practically all cotton worldwide.

With the post-war political changes, the direction of cotton imports changed and it became necessary to ensure the ability to test cotton from the Soviet Union. Moreover, in the 1950s, instrumental testing of cotton was initiated, which led to the establishment in 1961 of the specialized laboratory at the Association, that gained accreditation for arbitration testing of cotton in 1965.

Since its inception, the Gdynia Cotton Association has collaborated with the most important international cotton organizations, including The International Cotton Advisory Committee (ICAC) in Washington, EUROCOTON in Brussels, The International Cotton Association (ICA), and The Committee for International Cooperation Between Cotton Associations (CICCA) in Liverpool, The American Cotton Shippers Association (ACSA) in Memphis, and Bremer Baumwollbörse (BBB) in Bremen. Representatives of the GCA have for a long time participated in meetings and held positions in the leadership of these organizations, working to protect the global cotton market, to promote principles of honesty, reliability, and good trading practices.

The Gdynia Cotton Association plays also an advisory role and participates in the work of national government administration and the European Commission on technical, technological, commercial, and legal issues. It exerts great effort to enforce the principles of sustainable development throughout the entire value chain of the textile and apparel sector as well as to promote cotton and other natural fibers as renewable and biodegradable raw materials that are friendly to humans, the environment, and the climate.