

BUCHAREST (Romania), March 19 (SeeNews) - **The Warsaw Stock exchange expects companies from South and East Europe to begin raising capital on its floor by the end of the year**, a senior bourse official said.

"For the couple of weeks there is revival of interest in the WSE from companies in **the Czech Republic, Ukraine, Bulgaria and Romania**. Also, WSE ipo [initial public offering] partners from the region admit an increased number of enquires," the Warsaw Stock exchange (WSE) [Business](#) development director, Robert Kwiatkowski, said in an exclusive interview for SeeNews.

He spoke on the occasion of the **2nd international forum Agribusiness in Ukraine organised by Adam Smith Conferences**.

"We estimate that by the end of this year a couple of new foreign companies, mainly from South and East Europe, will be present on our stock exchange."

Once the economic crisis is over, it would be much easier for WSE to attract foreign issuers. The bourse will continue to target South and East Europe and is expecting the first companies willing to raise capital on its floor to come from Romania, Bulgaria or Greece, Kwiatkowski explained.

"The crisis has influenced the economies in South and East Europe and almost completely stopped IPOs. However, once the macroeconomic situation starts to recover, the companies sooner or later will start to seek ways to raise capital. We should observe the first waves of IPOs probably closer to mid-year."

In January the Romanian derivatives and commodities exchange Sibex, in which WSE is a shareholder, launched a share trading platform. Last month the Bulgarian unit of Italy's UniCredit Group, UniCredit Bulbank, said that Bulgarian companies can list on the WSE following a deal on the provision of trustee services between the bank and the Polish central depository.

"The creation of the equities market and Sibex depository has created a potential for cooperation and access for Romanian companies to the Polish capital market. We talk with Sibex about potential issuers by dual-listing either on NewConnect or on the Main market. There is one [company](#), with which advanced talks are conducted, and some others that are interested," Kwiatkowski said.

"We also see the potential for new issuers from Bulgaria [...] Sopharma, a [company](#) from the pharmaceutical sector, shall be listed this year on the WSE."

The Warsaw Stock exchange ranked first in Europe in terms of the number of IPOs launched on it last year with Europe's top 2009 ipo, that of Poland's largest utility [company](#) PGE, leading the way. The bourse's main index WIG20 increased by 33% last year.

"The stock markets in South and East Europe will probably follow our path and we can observe the first symptoms as the markets started to revive after the crisis. Individuals come back to invest into shares, foreign investors become aware that the macroeconomic situation of individual countries has improved," Kwiatkowski said.