

## **BEST PRACTICE FOR GPW LISTED COMPANIES 2021**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Best Practice for GPW Listed Companies 2021 (“Best Practice 2021”, “Best Practice”) is a new edition of the code of corporate governance for issuers of shares listed on the GPW Main Market, originally adopted under the Exchange Rules in 2002. Similar to the previous editions of the Best Practice drafted by experts grouped in the GPW Corporate Governance Committee, the Best Practice 2021 reflects the present legal status and recent trends of corporate governance and addresses the proposals of market participants interested in improved corporate governance of listed companies.

In comparison with the Best Practice for GPW Listed Companies 2016, the new edition is simplified and abbreviated. The clear and concise language of the Best Practice 2021 and its transparent structure are designed to facilitate the interpretation of the principles by issuers and investors, supporting their application and the disclosure of best possible explanations. To offer additional support, guidelines concerning the application of the Best Practice are drafted and updated by the Corporate Governance Committee on the basis of questions raised and emerging practical considerations. The Q&A guidelines are designed to clarify the intentions behind the principles of the Best Practice and to introduce issuers and investors to the conditions necessary to acknowledge compliance with the principles.

Each section of the Best Practice opens with a general description of the goals to be pursued by listed companies through compliance with the principles defined in the section. The principles of the Best Practice apply according to the comply-or-explain approach. The corporate governance disclosure requirements for listed companies are laid down in the Exchange Rules. Each company is required to publish up-to-date information regarding compliance with the principles on terms defined by the Exchange Management Board. If a company does not comply with any of the principles, its disclosure should specify the circumstances and reasons of such non-compliance. The explanations should exhaustively and constructively clarify the reasons of a non-compliance and support assessment of the company’s approach to the application of the principles of the Best Practice and its commitment to high quality corporate governance. Irrespective of the foregoing, in the event of any incidental breach of a principle following prior declaration of regular compliance, companies are required to immediately disclose such event.

With a view to their image and reputation and in the best interest of the company and its shareholders, listed companies should strive to comply with the principles of corporate governance defined in the Best Practice according to the principles of proportionality and adequacy to their individual needs as measured in particular by the size of the company and the type and scale of its activity.

Companies represented by their management boards, while acting also through other corporate bodies, are individually responsible for compliance with the principles of corporate governance defined in the Best Practice and for the quality of published explanations. Each corporate body acting within its powers issues decisions concerning compliance with the principles of the Best Practice. Some of those principles may require new internal regulations, amendments of existing corporate documents, individual decisions or new solutions. As some of the principles concern the supervisory board and its members, the general meeting, and the shareholders, all corporate bodies are expected to take actions, including both practical steps and official declarations, to enable the best possible compliance with the principles of the Best Practice by all their addressees subject to the principles of proportionality and adequacy.

In line with the recommendations of the European Commission, within the limits of its powers, the Exchange monitors companies' compliance with the corporate governance principles with a special emphasis on the quality of explanations published according to the comply-or-explain approach. Issuers listed on the exchange should co-operate with the Exchange to that extent and provide on request any information necessary to verify their explanations and the status of their compliance with the principles of the Best Practice. Companies' commitment to quality corporate governance will benefit their reputation and positive relations with stakeholders.

## **1. DISCLOSURE POLICY, INVESTOR COMMUNICATIONS**

**In the interest of all market participants and their own interest, listed companies ensure quality investor communications and pursue a transparent and fair disclosure policy.**

- 1.1. Companies maintain efficient communications with capital market participants and provide fair information about matters that concern them. For that purpose, companies use diverse tools and forms of communication, including in particular the corporate website where they publish all information relevant for investors.
- 1.2. Companies make available their financial results compiled in periodic reports as soon as possible after the end of each reporting period; should that not be feasible for substantial reasons, companies publish at least preliminary financial estimates as soon as possible.
- 1.3. Companies integrate ESG factors in their business strategy, including in particular:
  - 1.3.1. environmental factors, including measures and risks relating to climate change and sustainable development;
  - 1.3.2. social and employee factors, including among others actions taken and planned to ensure equal treatment of women and men, decent working conditions, respect for employees' rights, dialogue with local communities, customer relations.
- 1.4. To ensure quality communications with stakeholders, as a part of the business strategy, companies publish on their website information concerning the framework of the strategy, measurable goals, including in particular long-term goals, planned activities and their status, defined by measures, both financial and non-financial. ESG information concerning the strategy should among others:
  - 1.4.1. explain how the decision-making processes of the company and its group members integrate climate change, including the resulting risks;
  - 1.4.2. present the equal pay index for employees, defined as the percentage difference between the average monthly pay (including bonuses, awards and other benefits) of women and men in the last year, and present information about actions taken to eliminate any pay gaps, including a presentation of related risks and the time horizon of the equality target.

- 1.5. Companies disclose at least on an annual basis the amounts expensed by the company and its group in support of culture, sports, charities, the media, social organisations, trade unions, etc. If the company or its group pay such expenses in the reporting year, the disclosure presents a list of such expenses.
- 1.6. Companies participating in the WIG20, mWIG40 or sWIG80 index hold on a quarterly basis and other companies hold at least on an annual basis a meeting with investors to which they invite in particular shareholders, analysts, industry experts and the media. At such meetings, the management board of the company presents and comments on the strategy and its implementation, the financial results of the company and its group, and the key events impacting the business of the company and its group, their results and outlook. At such meetings, the management board of the company publicly provides answers and explanations to questions raised.
- 1.7. If an investor requests any information about a company, the company replies immediately and in any case no later than within 14 days.

## **2. MANAGEMENT BOARD, SUPERVISORY BOARD**

**To ensure top standards of the responsibilities and effective performance of the management board and the supervisory board of a company, only persons with the adequate competences, skills and experience are appointed to the management board and the supervisory board.**

**Management Board members act in the interest of the company and are responsible for its activity. The management board is responsible among others for the company's leadership, engagement in setting and implementing its strategic objectives, and ensuring the company's efficiency and safety.**

**Supervisory board members acting in their function and to the extent of their responsibilities on the supervisory board follow their independent opinion and judgement, including in decision making, and act in the interest of the company.**

**The supervisory board functions in the spirit of debate and analyses the position of the company in the context of the sector and the market on the basis of information provided by the management board of the company and via the company's internal systems and functions and obtained from external sources, using the output of its committees. The supervisory board in particular issues opinions on the company's strategy, verifies the work of the management board in pursuit of defined strategic objectives, and monitors the company's performance.**

- 2.1. Companies should have in place a diversity policy applicable to the management board and the supervisory board, approved by the supervisory board and the general meeting, respectively. The diversity policy defines diversity goals and criteria, among others including gender, education, expertise, age, professional experience, and specifies the target dates and the monitoring systems for such goals. With regard to gender diversity of corporate bodies, the participation of the minority group in each body should be at least 30%.
- 2.2. Decisions to elect members of the management board or the supervisory board of companies should ensure that the composition of those bodies is diverse by appointing persons ensuring diversity, among others in order to achieve the target minimum participation of the minority group of at least 30% according to the goals of the established diversity policy referred to in principle 2.1.

- 2.3. At least two members of the supervisory board meet the criteria of being independent referred to in the Act of 11 May 2017 on Auditors, Audit Firms and Public Supervision, and have no actual and material relations with any shareholder who holds at least 5% of the total vote in the company.
- 2.4. The supervisory board and the management board vote in an open ballot unless otherwise required by law.
- 2.5. Members of the supervisory board and members of the management board who vote against a resolution may have their dissenting vote recorded in the minutes.
- 2.6. Functions on the management board of a company are the main area of the professional activity of management board members. Management board members should not engage in additional professional activities if the time devoted to such activities prevents their proper performance in the company.
- 2.7. A company's management board members may sit on corporate bodies of companies other than members of its group subject to the approval of the supervisory board.
- 2.8. Supervisory board members should be able to devote the time necessary to perform their duties.
- 2.9. The chair of the supervisory board should not combine this function with that of chair of the audit committee of the supervisory board.
- 2.10. Companies allocate administrative and financial resources necessary to ensure efficient functioning of the supervisory board in a manner adequate to their size and financial standing.
- 2.11. In addition to its responsibilities laid down in the legislation, the supervisory board prepares and presents an annual report to the annual general meeting once per year. Such report includes at least the following:
  - 2.11.1. information about the members of the supervisory board and its committees, including indication of those supervisory board members who fulfil the criteria of being independent referred to in the Act of 11 May 2017 on Auditors, Audit Firms and Public Supervision and those supervisory board members who have no actual and material relations with any shareholder who holds at least 5% of the total vote in the company, and information about the members of the supervisory board in the context of diversity;
  - 2.11.2. summary of the activity of the supervisory board and its committees;

- 2.11.3. assessment of the company's standing on a consolidated basis, including assessment of the internal control, risk management and compliance systems and the internal audit function, and information about measures taken by the supervisory board to perform such assessment; such assessment should cover all significant controls, in particular reporting and operational controls;
- 2.11.4. assessment of the company's compliance with the corporate governance principles and the manner of compliance with the disclosure obligations concerning compliance with the corporate governance principles defined in the Exchange Rules and the regulations on current and periodic reports published by issuers of securities, and information about measures taken by the supervisory board to perform such assessment;
- 2.11.5. assessment of the rationality of expenses referred to in principle 1.5;
- 2.11.6. information regarding the degree of implementation of the diversity policy applicable to the management board and the supervisory board, including the achievement of goals referred to in principle 2.1.

### **3. INTERNAL SYSTEMS AND FUNCTIONS**

**Efficient internal systems and functions are an indispensable tool of exercising supervision over a company.**

**The systems cover the company and all areas of activity of its group which have a significant impact on the position of the company.**

- 3.1. Listed companies maintain efficient internal control, risk management and compliance systems and an efficient internal audit function adequate to the size of the company and the type and scale of its activity; the management board is responsible for their functioning.
- 3.2. Companies' organisation includes units responsible for the tasks of individual systems and functions unless it is not reasonable due to the size of the company or the type of its activity.
- 3.3. Companies participating in the WIG20, mWIG40 or sWIG80 index appoint an internal auditor to head the internal audit function in compliance with generally accepted international standards for the professional practice of internal auditing. In other companies which do not appoint an internal auditor who meets such requirements, the audit committee (or the supervisory board if it performs the functions of the audit committee) assesses on an annual basis whether such person should be appointed.
- 3.4. The remuneration of persons responsible for risk and compliance management and of the head of internal audit should depend on the performance of delegated tasks rather than short-term results of the company.
- 3.5. Persons responsible for risk and compliance management report directly to the president or other member of the management board.
- 3.6. The head of internal audit reports organisationally to the president of the management board and functionally to the chair of the audit committee or the chair of the supervisory board if the supervisory board performs the functions of the audit committee.
- 3.7. Principles 3.4 to 3.6 apply also to members of the company's group which are material to its activity if they appoint persons to perform such tasks.
- 3.8. The person responsible for internal audit or the management board if such function is not performed separately in the company reports to the supervisory board at



least once per year with their assessment of the efficiency of the systems and functions referred to in principle 3.1 and tables a relevant report.

- 3.9. The supervisory board monitors the efficiency of the systems and functions referred to in principle 3.1 among others on the basis of reports provided periodically by the persons responsible for the functions and the company's management board, and makes annual assessment of the efficiency of such systems and functions according to principle 2.11.3. Where the company has an audit committee, the audit committee monitors the efficiency of the systems and functions referred to in principle 3.1, which however does not release the supervisory board from the annual assessment of the efficiency of such systems and functions.
- 3.10. Companies participating in the WIG20, mWIG40 or sWIG80 index have the internal audit function reviewed at least once every five years by an independent auditor appointed with the participation of the audit committee.

#### **4. GENERAL MEETING, SHAREHOLDER RELATIONS**

**The management board and the supervisory board of listed companies should encourage the engagement of shareholders in matters of the company, in particular through active participation in the general meeting, either in person or through a proxy.**

**The general meeting should proceed by respecting the rights of all shareholders and ensuring that passed resolutions do not infringe on legitimate interests of different groups of shareholders.**

**Shareholders who participate in a general meeting exercise their rights in accordance with the rules of good conduct. Participants of a general meeting should come prepared to the general meeting.**

- 4.1. Companies should enable their shareholders to participate in a general meeting by means of electronic communication (e-meeting) if justified by the expectations of shareholders notified to the company, provided that the company is in a position to provide the technical infrastructure necessary for such general meeting to proceed.
- 4.2. Companies set the place and date and the form of a general meeting so as to enable the participation of the highest possible number of shareholders. For that purpose, companies strive to ensure that the cancellation of a general meeting, change of its date or break in its proceedings take place only if justified and do not prevent or limit the exercising of the shareholders' rights to participate in the general meeting.
- 4.3. Companies provide a public real-life broadcast of the general meeting.
- 4.4. Presence of representatives of the media is allowed at general meetings.
- 4.5. If the management board becomes aware a general meeting being convened pursuant to Article 399 § 2 – 4 of the Commercial Companies Code, the management board immediately takes steps which it is required to take in order to organise and conduct the general meeting. The foregoing applies also where a general meeting is convened under authority granted by the registration court according to Article 400 § 3 of the Commercial Companies Code.
- 4.6. To help shareholders participating in a general meeting to vote on resolutions with adequate understanding, draft resolutions of the general meeting concerning matters and decisions other than points of order should contain a justification, unless it follows

from documentation tabled to the general meeting. If a matter is put on the agenda of the general meeting at the request of a shareholder or shareholders, the management board requests presentation of the justification of the proposed resolution, unless previously presented by such shareholder or shareholders.

- 4.7. The supervisory board issues opinions on draft resolutions put by the management board on the agenda of the general meeting.
- 4.8. Draft resolutions of the general meeting on matters put on the agenda of the general meeting should be tabled by shareholders no later than three days before the general meeting.
- 4.9. If the general meeting is to appoint members of the supervisory board or members of the supervisory board for a new term of office:
  - 4.9.1. candidates for members of the supervisory board should be nominated with a notice necessary for shareholders present at the general meeting to make an informed decision and in any case no later than three days before the general meeting; the names of candidates and all related documents should be immediately published on the company's website;
  - 4.9.2. candidates for members of the supervisory board make a declaration concerning fulfilment of the requirements for members of the audit committee referred to in the Act of 11 May 2017 on Auditors, Audit Firms and Public Supervision and having actual and material relations with any shareholder who holds at least 5% of the total vote in the company.
- 4.10. Any exercise of the rights of shareholders or the way in which they exercise their rights must not hinder the proper functioning of the governing bodies of the company.
- 4.11. Members of the management board and members of the supervisory board participate in a general meeting, at the location of the meeting or via means of bilateral real-time electronic communication, as necessary to speak on matters discussed by the general meeting and answer questions asked at the general meeting. The management board presents to participants of an annual general meeting the financial results of the company and other relevant information, including non-financial information, contained in the financial statements to be approved by the general meeting. The management board presents key events of the last financial year, compares presented data with previous years, and presents the degree of implementation of the plans for the last year.
- 4.12. Resolutions of the general meeting concerning an issue of shares with subscription rights should specify the issue price or the mechanism of setting the price or authorise

the competent body to set the price prior to the subscription right record date within a timeframe necessary for investors to make decisions.

4.13. Resolutions concerning a new issue of shares with the exclusion of subscription rights which grant pre-emptive rights for new issue shares to selected shareholders or other entities may pass subject at least to the following three criteria:

- a) the company has a rational, economically justified need to urgently raise capital or the share issue is related to rational, economically justified transactions, among others such as a merger with or the take-over of another company, or the shares are to be taken up under an incentive scheme established by the company;
- b) the persons granted the pre-emptive right are to be selected according to objective general criteria;
- c) the purchase price of the shares is in a rational relation with the current share price of the company or is to be determined in book-building on the market.

4.14. Companies should strive to distribute their profits by paying out dividends. Companies may retain all their earnings subject to any of the following criteria:

- a) the earnings are minimal and consequently the dividend would be immaterial in relation to the value of the shares;
- b) the company reports uncovered losses from previous years and the earnings are used to reduce such losses;
- c) the company can demonstrate that investment of the earnings will generate tangible benefits for the shareholders;
- d) the company generates insufficient cash flows to pay out dividends;
- e) a dividend payment would substantially increase the risk to covenants under the company's binding credit facilities or terms of bond issue;
- f) retention of the company's earnings follows recommendations of the authority which supervises the company by virtue of its business activity.

## 5. CONFLICT OF INTEREST, RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

*For the purpose of this section, 'related party' is defined within the meaning of the International Accounting Standards approved in Regulation No (EU) 1606/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 July 2002 on the application of international accounting standards.*

**Companies and their groups should have in place transparent procedures for managing conflicts of interest and for related party transactions where a conflict of interest may occur. The procedures should provide for ways to identify and disclose such cases and the course of action in the event that they occur.**

**Members of the management board and members of the supervisory board should refrain from professional or other activities which might cause a conflict of interest or adversely affect their reputation as members of the corporate body, and where a conflict of interest arises, they should immediately disclose it.**

- 5.1. Members of the management board and members of the supervisory board notify the management board or the supervisory board, respectively, of any conflict of interest which has arisen or may arise, and refrain from discussions on the issue which may give rise to such a conflict of interest in their case.
- 5.2. Where a member of the management board or a member of the supervisory board concludes that a decision of the management board or the supervisory board, respectively, is in conflict with the interest of the company, he or she should request that the minutes of the management board or supervisory board meeting show his or her dissenting opinion.
- 5.3. No shareholder should have preference over other shareholders in related party transactions. The foregoing also concerns transactions concluded by the company's shareholders with members of the company's group.
- 5.4. Companies may buy back their own shares only in a procedure which respects the rights of all shareholders.
- 5.5. If a transaction concluded by a company with its related party requires the consent of the supervisory board, before giving its consent the supervisory board assesses whether to ask a prior opinion of a third party which can provide valuation of the transaction and review its economic impact.
- 5.6. If a related party transaction requires the consent of the general meeting, the supervisory board issues an opinion on the rationale of such transaction. In that

case, the supervisory board assesses whether to ask a prior opinion of a third party referred to in principle 5.5.

- 5.7. If a decision concerning the company's significant transaction with a related party is made by the general meeting, the company should give all shareholders access to information necessary to assess the impact of the transaction on the interest of the company before the decision is made, including an opinion of the supervisory board referred to in principle 5.6.

## **6. REMUNERATION**

**Companies and their groups protect the stability of their management teams, among others by transparent, fair, consistent and non-discriminatory terms of remuneration, including equal pay for women and men.**

**Companies' remuneration policy for members of corporate bodies and key managers should in particular determine the form, structure, and method of determining and payment of the remuneration.**

- 6.1. The remuneration of members of the management board and members of the supervisory board and key managers should be sufficient to attract, retain and motivate persons with skills necessary for proper management and supervision of the company. The level of remuneration should be adequate to the tasks and responsibilities delegated to individuals and their resulting accountability.
- 6.2. Incentive schemes should be constructed in a way necessary among others to tie the level of remuneration of members of the company's management board and key managers to the actual long-term standing of the company measured by its financial and non-financial results as well as long-term shareholder value creation, sustainable development and the company's stability.
- 6.3. If companies' incentive schemes include a stock option programme for managers, the implementation of the stock option programme should depend on the beneficiaries' achievement, over a period of at least three years, of pre-defined, realistic financial and non-financial targets and sustainable development goals adequate to the company, and the share price or option exercise price for the beneficiaries cannot differ from the value of the shares at the time when such programme was approved.
- 6.4. As the supervisory board performs its responsibilities on a continuous basis, the remuneration of supervisory board members cannot depend on the number of meetings held. The remuneration of members of committees, in particular the audit committee, should take into account additional workload on the committee.
- 6.5. The level of remuneration of supervisory board members should not depend on the company's short-term results.