

## British entrepreneur mulls construction of eight malls in Bulgaria

John Cutts, the founder and chief executive of commercial property developer Parkridge, is continuing his expansion into East Europe, the Financial Times reported on February 27.

Although the his initial plans envisaged expansion to Poland, given its key location, he also saw good opportunities for investment in retail compounds in Bulgaria and Ukraine.

Seven retail centres have been erected in Warsaw since Parkridge set foot on the Polish market, which means that it might be over-supplied soon, the developer said. He added that the Czech Republic used to offer good potential, but it faced a similar problem of reaching its capacity for absorbing commercial establishments.

Cutts's strategy now is to focus on smaller cities, with a population of 100 000 to 200 000 people, where competition for retail space is limited. He also plans to apply his strategy to the Ukrainian and Bulgarian market. Bulgaria has a potential for opening eight commercial centres and Ukraine has capacity for 20 compounds, he said, citing the number of towns with a population of around 300 000 people

The entrepreneur has declared that he will not invest in shopping centres in large cities like Kiev. They offer better opportunities for investment in logistic developments instead, he believes.

The company also has a sound interest in Russia and Romania, where it will concentrate on industrial space, whereas Kazakhstan offers good opportunities for both retail and industrial investment.

John Cutts, who owns a 40 per cent share in Parkridge, ranked 229 in the UK's rich list, has a personal fortune of 320 million pounds, according to The Sunday Times ratings for 2007. However, he is relatively unknown outside his business activities, which are focused primarily in the industrial and retail sector.