

PREFACE

The 6th International Conference entitled "European Union Integration Processes. Methodological and Comparative Approaches" organized by the Chair of Economic and Social Statistics, University of Łódź, was held in Łódź, June 10–11, 2005.

The Conference was mainly dedicated to the economic aspects of the broadened European Union. Both in the papers and discussions proceeded during each of the sessions, participants emphasized the fact that apart from existing differences conditioned on historical development, we can notice similar symptoms and consequences of the system transformation and integration processes in various social systems and regions of Europe. Indicated discrepancies come out, among others, in the course of populational processes as well as in changes in financial standing of selected categories of households and in occurrence of regional, inside the countries, diversities of unemployment rates and situation on the labour market.

This monograph is a result of improved and modified, under the influence of proceeded discussions, papers presented during the Conference. The particular papers are included in the following chapters:

- Comparative studies of the European Union economies,
- Investments, capital market, and banking,
- Sectorial analysis of the Polish economy and selected European Union countries,
- Innovation, education and labour market,
- Methodological and empirical aspects of functioning of chosen sectors of economies.

In Chapter I, authors raise the issue of openness of the markets of public procurement in Europe as well as legal changes on this market in Poland, in the context of new directives of the European Union.

In Chapter II, participants of the Conference try to answer the question whether Poland's accession to the European Union contributed to the increase in interest of investors representing countries of the European Union in Polish capital market. The extent of the capital involvement of foreign investors in Polish exchange market, including premises that these investors, being shareholders of public companies, are guided by is assessed. This chapter presents

also the impact of foreign direct investments on changes in effectiveness of production processes in selected countries of the European Union. In addition, the effectiveness of selected instruments of technical analysis on forward markets is evaluated. Methodological aspects of investigating the process of the inflow of foreign direct investments into the banking sector in Poland as well as the assessment of various information content of economic value added and financial streams for shareholders are presented. The volume and structure of investment portfolios of insurance companies and pension funds in countries of the European Union are compared. Additionally, directions of development of investment activity of insurance companies are indicated.

Chapter III is dedicated to sectorial analysis of economy of Poland and selected countries of the European Union. The issue of significant diversity of expenditures spent on health protection in countries of the European Union as well as health protection in the countries of the Community in the context of, among others, realization of instructions of balanced development in Poland are discussed. What is more, tax burdens of Polish farms are compared with farms' tax burdens of other countries of the European Union. Prospects for development of light industry in Łódź in the context of globalization of European economies are presented. Interrelations between economic development and consumption of electric energy of selected countries are discussed. The role and significance of institutions of business environment in development of rural entrepreneurship in the context of integration with the European Union are presented.

Chapter IV focuses mainly on issues concerning innovation, education and labour market in Poland in the context of European integration. The issue of conditions of innovation growth in economies of countries of the European Union is discussed. Additionally, the problem of innovation capability of Polish economy, with special reference to the analysis of its innovative potential and activity as well as conditions of Poland's effective joining the system of economy based on knowledge are presented. Issues connected with the labour supply in Poland are also raised.

Chapter V is dedicated to methodological and empirical aspects of functioning of chosen sectors of economies. The issue of extremely unequal distribution of income of Polish society in comparison with other countries of the European Community is raised. What is more, issues connected with the risk of experiencing unemployment in Poland are raised.