

INTRODUCTION

The ongoing process of reforming the economy of Poland – manifested in the transition from the central control system to a market economy – requires changes in the operating of various industrial companies. As a result, different trends are observed that manifest themselves in the disappearance, stagnation or development of companies, as well as the creation of new firms. These different behaviours of economic entities affect the reconstruction of spatial structures on a local, regional and national scales. At the same time the industry of Poland, as well as the entire national economy, shows an increasing openness to the global economy, in which the primary factor shaping businesses are the rules of competitiveness. Hence the recession and the loss of national firms is associated with low level of competitiveness of many companies that operated in the centrally-planned economy. The opening of the national economy to the global system also means that many companies are gradually incorporated into the structure of global corporations, which define their specific production and service tasks. Due to the relatively lower costs and relatively advanced human resources many Western corporations transfer parts of their production and service activities to Poland through foreign direct investment. Taking advantage of lower labour costs, the products of these companies become more competitive and are included in the market network of individual corporations.

Changing conditions of operation of enterprises and the consequent transformation of the structure of the economy are reflected in the research devoted to the issues of industrial geography. In Poland, they are mainly concentrated in the activities of the Industrial Geography Commission functioning in the framework of the Polish Geographical Society. The results of the research related to the geography of industry are presented at the annual conferences dealing with, among others, the changes in the spatial structure of industry and services in the conditions of the economic crisis, the role of industry and services in the development of the knowledge economy and shaping the information society, the impact of innovation on the development of enterprises and the economy in spatial systems, as well as the methodological problems of industrial geography. So far 29 conferences have been held and the 30th jubilee one is planned to be held in December 2014. The studies dealing with the above-mentioned issues have been published in 36 volumes of papers, including 24 volumes within the framework of *Studies of the Industrial Geography Commission of the Polish Geographical Society*.

This 25th volume is an attempt to present the directions of the undertaken research in the geography of industry and the results of their partial verification in the analytical studies. In the first article T. Strykiewicz outlines the changes in the geography of the Polish industry in recent years. Z. Ziolo presents a proposal for model recognition of companies' position

in the spatial structure of the industry, in an attempt to generalise the results of past research in the Polish industrial geography. Other papers deal with some current research problems related to the economic situation in the manufacturing (W. Gierańczyk), the spatial concentration of multinational IT corporations (W. Kilar), the formation of new global centres of the automotive industry (M. Wójtowicz, T. Rachwał), the trends in the development of the pharmaceutical industry in the world (S. Dorocki), the role of institutional context in the development of the SME biotech sector in Poland (G. Micek, P. Gleadle, P. Dawidko), the contemporary transformation of the spatial structure of the fish processing industry (P. Czaplinski), the economic activity in industry and construction (M. Płaziak, A. I. Szymańska), the role of industry in small towns in the hinterland of agglomerations on the examples from Poland and France (A. Kwiatek-Sołtys, K. Wiedermann, H. Mainet, J.-Ch. Edouard), the restructuring of old industrial districts on the example of Sosnowiec and Budějovice (D. Popjaková, M. Tkocz, M. Vančura) as well as the location factors of foreign investments in Poland (A. Tobolska).

The studies undertaken so far have provided many examples of behaviour of various industrial enterprises and the structural changes in local systems and industrial centres, which require subsequent summaries, as well as undertaking new research problems and developing new or improving the existing research methods. This purpose will be served by the following 30th Conference on *Structural Transformations of Industry and Services in Spatial Systems – Research-related Issues* (Kraków, 1–2 December 2014) and the subsequent papers published in this journal. We realise that the rapid pace of technological development, enhancing the spatial cooperation and market relationships will affect the opening of new research problems that will require the improvement of analytical methods and the formulation of regularity. We assume that this type of work will have, in addition to the methodological and cognitive values, also the application values, especially in the construction of the development strategy of spatial systems of various scales.

We would like to stress that our journal is open to researchers from different countries, who address these current issues on the basis of industrial geography. We hope that the undertaken joint research and publication of the results in this journal will contribute to a better understanding of the increasing globalisation of products and markets, and will play an important role in setting the directions of development of productive and service activities in different countries.

Zbigniew Ziolo, Tomasz Rachwał