

INTRODUCTION

The functioning of the services sector is closely related to socio-economic development and the times of prosperity or economic crisis. Economic recession and crisis are particularly damaging to the intensity of development of various branches of the services sector. They are dependant on the financial status of people who are willing to spend some of their income on services offered to them, as well as on the financial resources of enterprises subcontracting a share of services. They are also dependant on insurance companies as they finance medical insurance for people. Different branches of the services sector may exhibit different development trends. Some of them lose in importance and fall into recession, other are stagnant. At the same time, a crisis makes it possible for new enterprises to emerge, which prompts the development of some types of services.

In a way connected with the above mentioned factors are the individual papers published in the present volume. Their authors analyze the impact of economic crises on selected types of services. The most palpably negative influence of said downturn can be observed in the tourism services. This is due to the shrinking financial resources of people. This is particularly visible in changes within the hotel-chains organization and within the attractiveness of particular tourist destinations. It applies in particular to countries in which recession was especially deep. Changes occur also in the structure and functioning of health-resorts. They are brought to life either by health-maintenance institutions sending patients there as part of the health-care system or by individuals arriving in such resorts in hope of improving their health. The quality of infrastructure offered is also of great importance, especially in the context of tourism and skiing. This kind of services is usually of interest to people with sufficient finances and sport institutions that allocate a portion of their money to train their members in different winter sports. In times of a crisis, what also changes are the conditions of the development of business-environment service sector. In such a case, the awareness of the changing legal instruments is of extreme importance. They undergo constant changes, thus direct selling of Computed-Assisted Legal Research Systems is a vital source of income for law firms. During the economic crisis, the conditions in which higher education institutions function are also different. The downturn causes universities to compete for students. Lack of interest in extramural studies (caused by small financial resources of society) and population decline (resulting in problems with sufficient number of university admissions) both contribute to the above-mentioned problem. Therefore, the need for improving the quality of education offer arises. It is particularly important in the context of students' transition into the labor market and developing tools helpful in curbing the economic crisis. One of such tools may be putting more emphasis on social innovations, which might encourage the

development of modern sectors of industry. In this case, tax preferences for the innovative companies play crucial role. While entering a new phase of development, new factors influencing the choice of location for an enterprise are at work. Unlike the traditional (classical) factors, they are more closely connected to the quality of innovation offered and the quality of human (and social) capital. Changes in the functioning conditions of units of economy call for more precise methods of measuring their intensity, in order to determine their impact on companies. The use of discriminatory methods in assessing the financial condition of enterprises provides a good example.

The articles presented cover the topic of the behavior of selected elements of the service sector and point to the differences in times of crisis. Therefore, it seems necessary that the topic should be further investigated. Additional analysis should focus on the changing situation, i.e. overcoming the economic crisis and gradual re-awakening of the economic development.

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