

INTRODUCTION

The advancing processes of civilizational development shape more and more complex mechanisms of socio-economic and cultural development, which in fact affect the whole global space. This leads to growing similarity of many economic and social structures, which generates possibilities of increasing regional, national, European and global cooperation. Thus globalization processes affect both various economic subjects, and social structures of spatial systems of varied scale. These processes also shape the structures of the European Union, which forms a new pole of growth in the global economy through integration of economic, social and cultural potential.

The above ideas are referred to in the present volume, dedicated to the influence of globalization and European integration on the transformation of industrial structures. This work presents the research achievements of the national academic centres which examine the problems of industrial structures transformation. The papers included in this volume generally focus on two main topics. The first one is influence of globalization processes on behaviour of various types of industrial enterprises; the other is shaping of various sectors of economy as an effect of globalization processes.

In his paper, Z.Ziolo attempts at showing the formation processes of international corporations as the leading drives of the advancing globalization processes. In relation to the existing scientific achievements, he sketches a model of functioning of industrial corporations in their environment; this forms a background for the presentation of various degrees of advancement in the formation process of international corporations, and of location inquiries of global companies in Poland.

Under the influence of globalization and European integration processes, the economic structure of countries is rebuilt; this concerns especially the countries previously associated with the planned economy system. This problem is discussed on the example of Poland by M.G.Woźniak, who analyzes the structural changes in the country's economy in the period of system transformations. In this paper, special attention is paid to the dynamics and the gross value added structure, as well as the participation of high technologies industry in the sold product and employment. The author concludes that these new indexes correctly characterize both the level of economic development and the modernity of the economy.

One of the conditions in developmental processes is the intensification of the development of information systems, which enable successful communication between the participants of the economic process, force – as T.Bal-Woźniak assumes – the creativity of various organizations and allow introducing innovative measures that lead to an increase in efficiency and competitiveness of enterprises.

In world economy, the more and more important role is played by new economic centres, such as China and India. Extremely fast development dynamics of China increased its demand for various products, including metallurgy production. As A. Wieloński emphasizes, it is reflected in the revival of Polish iron and steel metallurgy, which is to a gradually greater extent included in the structure of Hindu global corporations, and currently works chiefly to satisfy the needs of the dynamically evolving Chinese economy.

In the light of the analysis of functioning of global corporations, it is assumed that one of the leading economic growth sectors is the intensively developing automobile industry. It is emphasized by the study by M. Wójtowicz, which contains an analysis of changes in the balance of trade of Brazilian automobile industry in the years 1990–2006, against the background of direct foreign investments inflow into the industry. P. Lizak's research shows that similar tendencies are characteristic of the Polish automobile industry, especially in the years of economic system change, under the influence of international corporations' financial involvement in this industry.

European integration processes that aim at introducing order to the market, especially the agriculture, affect the enterprises in this sector. This is shown in the analysis by M. Niemczak, concerning the transformations in the Polish sugar industry.

An elementary factor in entering the information stage of social growth is the development of a new sector connected with current information technologies. It influences the intensive process of IT companies formation, which, as W. Kilar states, are characterized by large economic potential and are active in fact in the whole global economic space. This industry affects the rising competitiveness of the remaining economic sectors, e.g. due to the employment of the bar code, which contributes to the increase in efficiency of trading companies. This is shown by M. Męczyński in his paper. Owing to the development of IT companies, precise geodetic information banks are created. This issue is presented on the example of the European GNSS programmes by W. Warcholik, who emphasizes the development of the global market of navigation systems.

Increasing the speed of socio-economic development is enabled by actions of those countries which create advantageous conditions for new locations of economic activity. This problem is discussed by A. Trojak and W. Wiedermann, who show the special economic zones as privileged areas of new economic activity location on the example of Poland and the Czech Republic. A similar function is fulfilled by the Russian technology parks, as shown by U. Grzyb.

The advancing globalization processes also influence the formation of spatial links between enterprises of different categories (J. Machowski), which change their marketing activity, adapting it to the contemporary market requirements (R. Repetowski).

Globalization and European integration processes, which lead to an increase in economic relations, apart from many advantages, as A.M. Niżnik emphasizes, also contribute to the collapse of traditional industries and forms of economy, as a result of adaptation of the economic structures to the market principles. This is visible e.g. in the influence of the intensifying globalization processes on selection and elimination of inefficient enterprises, which leads to a change in function and a necessity of spatial revitalization of many industrial centres in Great Britain (M. Kopeć) and Poland (K. Świerczewska-Pietras).

The presented considerations emphasize different aspects of the influence of globalization processes on enterprises, spatial structures and branches of industry. In view of the complexity of these problems, it seems necessary to conduct ever more precise research into the activity of particular industrial sectors, on the background of changing tendencies in civilizational development. We assume that this research, besides theoretical and cognitive aspects, will also have significance in the creation of strategies for particular enterprises, sectors and industrial areas, adapting them to the dynamically changing external conditions.