

## INTRODUCTION

In the processes of socio-economic and cultural development it is particularly important to identify opportunities for shaping regional and local systems. Those systems often create different conditions for locating and developing various business entities and sectors of economic activity. Therefore, an important issue is the search for an answer to the question about the extent to which such conditions affect the direction of transformation of both business entities and various sectors of economic activity. Papers by individual authors included in the present volume refer to this research area. They are to demonstrate the regularities in terms of development of selected sectors.

Adopting the evolutionary nature of the labour market, a new concept was presented for analysing changes in the employment structure in European Union countries in the years 2008–2017. Particular emphasis should be put on the use of a non-standard set of characteristics that illustrate the indicators of measures of variability and similarity of sectoral structures of analysed countries (M. Markowska, A. Sokołowski).

In the period of entering the information phase of development, in which the fundamental economic base is science and economy is based on knowledge, an important issue is education, continuing education and training of the employees. Those aspects allow for an increase in the level of innovation of the economies of the EU countries. Also discussed were various education methods in the form of additional training and courses which allow to obtain new and improve existing qualifications necessary for the development of a particular company or institution (G. Węgrzyn).

Currently, new industrial sectors play an increasingly important role, which is reflected in the development of the recording industry offering different kinds of cultural goods. Hence, the issue of the competitive sustainability of the business entities representing them appears to be an important one, as illustrated by the Visegrad countries (Z. Michalik). Individual countries have responded to the economic crisis to a varying degree, as indicated by studies on the resilience of cities performing command and control functions in countries of Central Europe (P. Raźniak, S. Dorocki, A. Winiarczyk-Raźniak). The processes of transformations of spatial systems are significantly influenced by the socio-economic and cultural potential of cities which generally affect the shaping of regional and national systems. The issue is referred to in an overview of various indicators relating to the labour market, the level of entrepreneurship, the economic structure, the level of innovativeness, based on which the economic condition of cities has been established (K. Gwosdz, G. Micek, A. Sobala-Gwosdz, A. Świągost).

During the period of changes in the national management system, different economic development zones are created in which of significant importance are the possibilities for locating new business entities that essentially influence the economic base of local systems. This is suggested by studies on the location of new companies and their functions in the economic zone in Wilkowice (Poland) (M. Tkocz). In the processes of local systems transformations, we observe frequent changes in their economic

function. This is indicated by an analysis of changes in the economic function from agricultural function, through agricultural and service function to service function in the field of tourism (D. Szostak).

A major problem in the management of local systems are the anthropogenic transformations of the terrain occurring during the mining activity which influence the creation of dumping grounds of waste rocks. They require rational use in local strategies in order to raise their economic attractiveness (D. Tyrna, Ł. Gawor, M. Marcisz, P. Dolnicki).

Global trends in socio-economic and political transformations affect the management changes in numerous countries. An example of this are foreign investments enabling the economic development of Siberia (N. Sysoeva), as well as the economic transformation of the border areas of Russia and Kazakhstan (A. Burnasov, M. Ilyushkina, Y. Kovalev, A. Stepanov, G. Nyussupova

In the economic development process, present is a number of phenomena negatively affecting the economic development and budgetary situation of individual countries. They result from the flaws of the country's financial instruments and the opportunities offered in the international environment. This is indicated by the existence of tax havens to which companies forward part of their income thus enabling a reduction of tax obligation (J. Pach).

It should be emphasised that the papers presented illustrate the different aspects of regional and local development. This current research problem requires constant analysis in order to improve business strategies of companies and regional and local systems.

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