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The World Congress of Economists in Mexico

The XVIII World Congress of International Economic Association (IEA) took place in Mexico from 19 to 23 June 2017. This organization, set up in 1950, brings together national economic associations, and other economic organizations. At present there are more than 70 such associations and organizations. IEA's current activities are supported by UNESCO, the World Bank and the European Commission. For many years, the Polish Economic Society has been an active member of this organization. The PTE representative is in the Council of this organization.

It is one of the two largest, most prestigious international economic organizations. The second one is the European Economic Association (EEA). They are not with competition with one another, but they work together in a complementary way. They vary in structure, reach, number of participants, frequency of meetings, etc.

IEA congresses are held every three years and are undoubtedly the most prestigious events in the economics community. The rank of these meetings is mainly due to the participation of prominent economists, including the Nobel Prize winners, and the importance of discussions, proposals, etc. The economists with considerable scientific achievements are usually the participants of Congresses. It is worth mentioning that the position of this organization is built by its presidents, among whom are economists such as E.A.G. Robinson, P.A. Samuelson, E. Lundberg, K.J. Arrow, A.B. Atkins, R.M. Solow, J. Kornai, M. Aoki or J. Stiglitz. IEA congresses are held on different continents, usually are an important event for the countries in which they take place.

EEA congresses take place every year and have 1500-2000 participants. Unlike the IEA, membership in this organization is individual. Although formally it is European association, economists from all continents can be found among its members and congress participants. Among them are young economists, often PhDs or adjuncts, as well as students. The congresses of this organization take place in European countries.

The Congress in Mexico gathered nearly 800 participants and invited guests. The sessions were held in plenary sessions (9 sessions) and in parallel sessions (around 15 at the same time). There were 140 such sessions during the Congress, which nearly 500 papers. Each session consisted of 3 - 4 papers. Some of them are called "invited sessions", there are sessions prepared entirely by individual universities, societies or institutions. All these sessions were held in two adjacent hotels (Camino Real Hotel and Sheraton Hotel) in which the participants of the Congress were accommodated.

It should be emphasized that the presented papers were selected by the 32-member Programme Committee. Usually such committees qualify for about 50% of the papers submitted. This selection determines the quality of the presentations. As a result, authors appreciate the opportunity to present a paper at the Congress and often mention it in their curriculum vitae. IEA congresses have an open formula, which means that they do not have specific themes or subject areas, so there is full freedom in this respect. Acceptance of the paper is determined by its content level. The originality of the problem, the new approach to the problem, the critical attitude towards the existing statements, etc. are valued in the selection process.

It is noteworthy a large number of plenary sessions. The organizers wanted to pay attention to the most important economic problems in the world. At the first of these sessions, the introductory lecture was delivered by prof. J. Stiglitz. The dynamics of increasing inequalities and the consequent threats

to the world economy were the main topics. The objects of the remaining sessions are the relationship between economics and psychology, the impact of the Internet on trade development, the role of local communities in global development, how to prepare economists for solving real world problems, and the influence of media on behavioral change.

Although the subject matter of the presentations was mainly concerned with current global economic problems, more often than in previous congresses national or regional issues were discussed. It probably had a connection with the location of Congress and the structure of its participants. In addition to the American economists, a large group of participants was from Latin America. Many papers are also devoted to the economic problems of Mexico. Theoretical considerations were supported by empirical research very often.

During the Congress a new macroeconomic models were wanted. Macroeconomic sessions (17 sessions), as well as economic growth sessions (12 sessions) and finance (12 sessions), tended in this direction. Unlike many previous congresses, there was a great interest in work problems (17 sessions), both nationally, where the authors typically presented the results of their own national and international empirical research. Less often the topic of the sessions concerned problems of management, protection of the environment, corruption or transformation.

The participation of Polish economists in Congress is difficult to define as numerous, because only five Polish lecturers, mostly young economists, were present. It is noteworthy that some of them were co-authors of two or even three papers. This modest contribution, however, was greater than that of the Congress in Jordan, where the presentations were presented by only two people. One of the reasons for the low turnout was the failed attempt to fund PTE scholarships for young economists. We were not able to raise funds from sponsors. Our stipendists had participated in the IEA Congress in Beijing.

Observing recent congresses we can get the impression that the IEA is dominated by American economists. American professors (although they are from different countries) were most often the presidents of this organization. One of the reasons for this is probably the high level of economic science in the United States, as evidenced by the number of Nobel laureates in economics. The reason for this is also the fact that European economists are more closely associated with the aforementioned European Economic Association. A certain departure from this rule was the last President prof. Timothy Basley, born in the United Kingdom, mainly limited his activity to his country.

In his speech at the end of the session President-Elect Prof. Kaushik Basu informed that the Congress in 2020 will take place in one of the following countries: Malaysia, India, Indonesia or Spain.

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(abstract and translation by Anna Kucharczyk)