

BOOK REVIEWS

Regional Dimension of the EU Economic Policies in Poland in 2007–2013, ed. Adam A. Ambroziak, Warsaw School of Economics Press, Warsaw 2015, 165 pp., ISBN 978-83-8030-021-7

The book is composed of five studies concerning various aspects of the cohesion policy. The first two essays, by Adam A. Ambroziak and Elżbieta Kawecka-Wyrzykowska, address general issues, while the next three, by Marzenna Weresa, Michał Schwabe and Grażyna Wojtkowska-Łodej, assess the activities under the cohesion policy in Poland in the 2007–2013 programming period. The last text, by Adam A. Ambroziak, focuses on state aid for enterprises between 2007 and 2013.

Essentially, the subject of the study is very relevant and important. As is commonly known, the funds provided by the EU to Poland (under regional policy) create a unique opportunity for economic development. Not only do they considerably increase the possibilities of financing investments in general but they also stimulate investments, which requires determination and effective programming and implementation of the planned activities.

This is particularly important given that the present programming period is the last one under which Poland receives such large transfers. The reasons for this are as follows.

First, some regions will no longer meet the criterion of Objective 1: Convergence (Masovian Voivodeship). Second, there has been a change in the approach to regional policy, which is reflected in the debate on cohesion policy, critical opinions of its effectiveness, drawing attention to the significance and role of well-developed regions and cities, which are particularly predestined to creating innovation and capable of emitting growth impulses to their surroundings. This seems to undermine the view that evening out development opportunities (convergence) is the most important task; supporting the most creative and innovative centres could prove a more effective option. After some time, due to the spread of knowledge (being considered a public good), less developed regions will start benefiting from the growth of the 'strongest' ones as well. Third, the

battle for the budget for 2014–2020 shows that we should expect future budget restrictions (this had already been announced), and this seems especially probable given the situation in the euro area and a potential ‘Greek exit’, which could cause considerable turbulences in EU markets.

This means that the way European funds received in this programming period are to be invested should be particularly well-thought out and that the experience gathered in 2007–2013 is especially important. Thus, studies such as these are highly valuable: based on a diligent analysis, they formulate recommendations for policies (policy implications) and politicians, pointing out what should be the focus of attention in the present programming period and how to avoid the mistakes that were made in 2007–2013.

The essays presented in the book address various subjects but all share the central theme of cohesion policy. Adam A. Ambroziak addresses the evolution of the approach to cohesion policy and argues in a highly lucid manner that the current option of this policy could change the rules of division of funds in future programming periods, which – as has already been mentioned – should be a ‘warning signal’ for Poland.

The second study, by Elżbieta Kawecka-Wyrzykowska, focuses on the issue of compliance of Polish strategic documents with the Lisbon Strategy and the Europe 2020 strategy. I believe that it is very important to address this issue; the key element of successful implementation and execution of projects is the elimination of potential contradictions in the fundamental national and EU documents.

The next three essays, by Marzenna Weresa, Michał Schwabe and Grażyna Wojtkowska-Łodej, assess the execution of projects implemented in the programming period 2007–2013 in three areas: innovation and competitiveness of enterprises, human capital, and environmental protection. I believe that the choice of these particular areas is fully justified. In light of the achievements of new economic geography and new theories of growth, increasing competitiveness and innovation levels as well as the quality of human capital are the most important factors of growth, while environmental policy is one of the most restrictive policies and can even limit growth (in the mid-term perspective).

The book ends with another study by Adam A. Ambroziak, titled *State Aid to Enterprises in Polish regions in the Period 2007–2013*, which analyses state aid for development and for raising the competitiveness of Polish enterprises in the regional perspective, which – in my opinion – perfectly complements the entire content of the book.

In light of the specificities of the issues addressed in this book, the authors of the studies apply different methodologies, depending on the

issue in question. Apart from a qualitative analysis, some essays examine statistical data, illustrating the degree and structure of the absorption of funds, present certain regularities and trends, which often reveal considerable asymmetry in the use of funds by Polish regions.

The first essay, written by Adam A. Ambroziak and titled *Theoretical aspects of regional intervention*, provides a very good introduction to the discussion. It conducts a diligent and comprehensive overview of the literature on the subject, outlining briefly (as determined by the limited length of the study) the entire complexity of the problems concerning regional policy and the difficulties in choosing the right variant of the policy. The author evaluates the policy (just as it is the case in the other studies) from various angles: political interests, socio-ethical issues and economics. He does not ignore any voices that may be important for the debate, he quotes the arguments found in the Barca report and in the World Bank report, which – beside some contradicting views – have considerably influenced the present change in the approach to regional policy. Furthermore, it should be emphasised that the author remains neutral in his analysis of the various options of cohesion policy and objectively presents the arguments of the authors of other studies, those of key significance to the course of the debate. Ambroziak's literature review shows clearly the evolution of the approach to regional policy.

In the context of the debate, it is also worth noting that regional policy for many years 'resisted' any changes in the philosophical approach to economy. This is especially true of the 1980s, when the advantages of the free market and economic freedom were once again appreciated and when there were calls for reducing the role of the state to the bare minimum. This trend was especially strong in the economy of the United Kingdom under Margaret Thatcher (1979–1990) and the United States under Ronald Reagan (1981–1989), and the approach was also supported by international institutions (the Washington Consensus).

Those changes in economic policy were accompanied by a debate on its role and the extent of interference. It was pointed out that the flaws of governmental interventions were more harmful than the flaws of the market. Still, in the same period, European regional policy (the ERDF began its operations in 1975, but in the beginning it mainly reimbursed national spending) not only supported the SME sector, business environment institutions, intangible investments, R&D, transfer of technologies, or human resources but was also aimed at areas undergoing a structural crisis, which was clearly at variance with the increasingly popular 'dogma' of the effectiveness of horizontal actions.

In the next period (1989–1993), this trend became even more spectacular. Objective 2 of regional policy was formulated: ‘Converting the regions, frontier regions or parts of regions (including employment areas and urban communities) seriously affected by industrial decline (where both the percentage share of industrial activity and the average rate of unemployment exceed the Community average)’. The objective was accompanied by the following initiatives: RECHAR (support for areas dependent on coal-mining), RETEX (conversion of areas with a dominant role of the textiles industry), KONVER (conversion of areas with a dominant role of the arms industry).

Paradoxically, today, after the crisis has undermined the extremely neoliberal approach to economy, after huge assistance provided to the financial sector has challenged the dogma that the market will deal with the slump on its own, exactly opposite trends seems to be emerging in cohesion policy; equalisation is considered ineffective, and – while it is still applied – its rank and significance are considerably decreasing.

Leaving aside these remarks, the review of academic literature performed by Adam A. Ambroziak shows – as previously mentioned – the evolution of the approach to intervention. The author describes the principles of the new approach, with one of the most important of them being the adjustment of the type of intervention to the characteristics of the region, taking into account all of the local determinants (p. 24).

The author also quotes an OECD report according to which the general results of the cohesion policy are rather disappointing, which should be considered a further warning and an indication that the money that is now still guaranteed to Poland should be spent on well-considered, justified investments, suiting the endogenous potential of the region.

The second text, by Elżbieta Kawecka-Wyrzykowska and titled *Alignment of the Cohesion Policy in Poland to objectives and principles of EU economic strategies (the Lisbon and Europe 2020 Strategies)*, presents whether and to what extent the objectives of regional policy in Poland are coordinated with the EU’s economic strategies (the Lisbon Strategy and the Europe 2020 strategy). As promised in the introduction, the author conducted a thorough analysis of the provisions concerning cohesion policy in the Lisbon Strategy and examined whether and to what extent they have been reflected in the objectives set in Polish strategic documents. As regards Europe 2020, the focus is on how cohesion policy implements the objectives of this strategy. Furthermore, the author addresses the renewed strategy, aptly pointing out that the modified version already takes into account the new approach to this policy in the 2007–2013 programming period. Next, she discusses the provisions of Polish strategic documents

(DSRK, Strategia 2020, NSR 2020) and shows nine strategies integrated with them, whose very names (titles) indicate correlation with the objectives of cohesion policy.

The general conclusion from this intellectually disciplined disquisition is that changes that have taken place based on accumulated experience will force the Member States and regions to focus their efforts on a limited number of investments in order to maximise their effects. The new approach is also manifested in the capacity for adjustment due to coordinated activities under the European semester.

Indeed, all the arguments presented by the author indicate that all the present Polish and EU strategic documents are characterised by a high degree of coherence, which in itself provides a good basis for the implementation of the goals of cohesion policy on the EU, national and regional levels. It is worth adding that the author notices the problems related to the procedures in cohesion policy, referring to them as extremely bureaucratic, time-consuming and requiring dozens of officials.

The study by Marzenna Weresa titled *Instruments of Regional Innovation Policy Supporting Improvements in the Competitive Position of Polish Enterprises in 2007–2013* focuses on identifying of the instruments of innovation policy supporting the competitiveness of Polish enterprises that have been activated in the previous financial perspective (in Polish regions). Despite the rather modest size of the study, the author provides a synthetic discussion of all the important subjects required for a comprehensive analysis. A brief theoretical introduction reminds the reader that competitiveness is a highly complex category, that the approach to it is not unambiguous (as indicated by Ecorys studies, the structure of the Regional Competitiveness Index, etc.). Next, the author considers whether the Regional Innovation Strategy has properly addressed the issue of innovation and competitiveness on the enterprise level. She takes note of the differences between regional innovation strategies and, , divides them into three groups (using the division proposed by Gorzelak, taking into account specific criteria). Then follows a presentation of the instruments for supporting innovation and competitiveness of enterprises in Poland (divided into three groups of regions) and of the allocation of funds from Regional Operational Programmes supporting innovation and competitiveness. The data presented in the study points to the existence of considerable regional differences but many projects could still be implemented by the end of 2015, which might change the scale of disproportion. The second argument for exercising some caution in the interpretation of the available data is the fact that the actual effects of the allocation can be seen only in the long-term perspective. I would encourage the author to con-

tinue with these interesting studies because the conclusions could prove very important. The analysis conducted by Weresa suggests that despite considerable efforts and the application of many instruments, there was insufficient coordination to maintain balance between supporting competitiveness and cohesion. It is an important conclusion and a valuable advice for decision-makers.

The study by Michał Schwabe is titled *Effectiveness of support instruments for Polish entrepreneurs within the EU human capital development policy in the years 2007–2013*. The issue addressed therein is extremely important because, as previously mentioned, human capital is now considered the key factor of economic development. The author presents the objectives and priorities of the Regional Operational Programme Human Capital (pointing out those that were implemented on the regional level and those implemented on the national level). The overview of the undertakings conducted under this Operational Programme seems to suggest a considerable success. On the other hand, Poland fares very poorly compared to other EU countries and in GCR rankings. Can we therefore assess investments in human capital only on the basis of the spending on various measures aimed at improving it? Are the good reviews of courses (raising qualifications, improving education, vocational training) issued by people who benefit from them truly objective? The author points out, in a very detailed manner, that these opinions might be false. Finally, the gravest argument seems to be that the curricula of the proposed courses do not reflect the needs of enterprises while the trainers not always have sufficient qualifications.

The study by Grażyna Wojtkowska-Łodej, titled *Aid Instruments for Entrepreneurs in Regions in Poland under the EU Environmental Policy in the years 2007–2013*, addresses another very important and sensitive subject related to environmental policy. The author presents the objectives and instruments of environmental protection, the Polish documents regulating environmental protection issues, showing how they comply with European regulations. The study further presents the data concerning the spending on environmental protection according to national and regional operational programmes as well as the data concerning the implementation of the Operational Programme Infrastructure and Environment. Through a comprehensive analysis of indicators she shows that projects co-financed from EU funds have contributed considerably to the improvement of the environmental situation in many regions of Poland. In the future, the author could also try to conduct a comprehensive overview of the implementation of these projects after 2015.

These three studies evaluating the measured implemented under EU regional policy in the 2007–2013 programming period leads to a rath-

er surprising conclusion: the most notable and unchallenged effects achieved in relatively short time were those of environmental protection programmes. Indeed, they have led to an improvement of living conditions, but they also have economic implications. For the Polish economy, which is energy-intensive and largely based on coal, this economic dimension is not that positive.

The last essay, authored by Adam A. Ambroziak, is titled *State Aid to Enterprises in Polish Regions in the Period 2007–2013*. As we know, state aid is hedged with special restrictions (it is allowed in order to mitigate the imperfections of the market). The analysis conducted by the author suggests that only 30 per cent of the total amount spent on state aid was allocated to improving the competitiveness of enterprises (assistance regarding R&D&I, support for SMEs, for various forms of trainings and regional aid). Ambroziak's study leads to very important conclusions, which – in my opinion – provide the basis for deep reflection on the changes in state aid allocation.

The studies discussed above are of very high academic quality. Together, the essays constitute a coherent whole and provide much important and relevant information on the cohesion policy. They present the policy's evolution and the theoretical debate that led to this evolution. It has been shown that Polish strategic documents are consistent with EU strategies, which – given the additional agreements under the European semester – provides a good foundation for the implementation of the intended actions. Furthermore, on the basis of a thorough analysis of statistical data, the studies present the conclusions drawn from the previous programming period in the following spheres: innovation and competition, human capital, environmental protection and state aid for enterprises. These conclusions are particularly valuable and should be made public and used in the implementation of projects in the present programming period. They are of great significance for better and more effective use of the funds and should be taken into account to avoid the mistakes made in 2007–2013.

Krystyna Gawlikowska-Hueckel
Faculty of Economics
University of Gdansk

***The European Union and Poland – Problems and Achievements*, eds. Artur Adamczyk, Przemysław Dubel, Centre for Europe, University of Warsaw, Warsaw 2015, 185 pp., ISBN 978-83-7561-559-3**

Poland's membership in the European Union has been and will undoubtedly continue to be the subject of many political, legal, social and economic analyses. Especially important among these are those conducted by scientists and combining multiple disciplines of science as this by definition eliminates the main flaw that plagues some studies: a one-sided view on the consequences of Poland's accession to the European Union. This book is an excellent example of a multidirectional approach to the analysis of the complex effects of membership in the EU, not only in the purely economical dimension but also from the legal, political and social point of view. For obvious reasons, it does not cover all aspects of Poland's participation in European integration, but it skillfully and logically combines eight multifaceted analyses of the experience from membership in the European Union. The book titled *The European Union and Poland – Problems and Achievements* has been compiled and published by researchers from the Centre for Europe, University of Warsaw, all of them having many years of documented achievements in this field.

The analysis of the socioeconomic consequences of Poland's accession to the EU begins with the chapter 'Poland's Membership in the EU and Global Challenges. Selected Issues' by Kamil Zajączkowski and Marta Pachocka. The purpose of this study was to identify selected global challenges facing the European Union, and thus Poland as well, and to identify the main consequences for integration and the EU's position in the world. The authors aptly point out that by joining the European Union Poland has also become a constituent of a 'global actor', with all the positive and negative consequences of that fact. For the purpose of a detailed analysis, they identified the three key global challenges, on which the EU and Poland have to take positions: (a): wars, conflicts and the related EU crisis management operations, (b) poverty and the related EU develop-

ment assistance, as well as (c) migrations and the related EU migration policy; the subsequent parts of the chapter follow this division.

As regards the issues related to the European Union's crisis management missions in the world, the authors aptly point out the changes in the approach to the interrelated policies: the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy, as immanent components of the EU's comprehensive strategy for global activity. They emphasise that the CSDP should constitute added value with regard to NATO and that supporting CSDP should thus by no means be construed as creating competition for NATO. Furthermore, they perform a very precise and diligent review of the main missions in which Poland has participated and identify the key objectives it sought to achieve. They also note that the new global challenges require Poland's involvement on both the political and military levels throughout the world, not solely in the immediate geographical neighbourhood. This part is probably best summed up by an observation that in the present international situation economic power alone is not enough to effectively secure the EU's and its Member States' fundamental geopolitical interests.

In the next part of the first chapter, the authors try to answer the question of whether global development problems concern Poland as well. To this end, they present the outline of the EU's development policy as well as Poland's contribution to its formulation and implementation. They observe that the gradual increase in the amounts contributed by Poland to the EU budget is not accompanied by a dynamic growth of allocations to bilateral aid, with multilateral aid still prevailing. This situation is, however, not specific to Poland alone; it is true of all the new Member States. The authors, seeking to assess the development policy, point out that Poland's use of the available development assistance instruments has not been sufficient to improve its political and economic position, and they also suggest that Poland should place greater emphasis on projects related to the energy industry, the environment, or those that combine business and development. Without questioning the political value of Poland's involvement in international aspects, we need not forget about the economic consequences, about the traditional relations of some countries with certain regions, for example Africa, as well as about the potential costs and prospects of becoming a full participant in development policy.

International migration has been rightly identified as the third challenge faced by the European Unions. This is a particularly sensitive subject in the present situation, in mid-2015, and it seems that it should be addressed using different instruments than the ones applied so far. In this context, the analysis of the evolution of the European migration policy

towards movements of non-EU citizens is very well done. Furthermore, the authors describe the common elements of the Polish migration policy, its adjustments and 'Europeanisation' towards the actions of the EU in response to global challenges. It seems, however, that apart from traditional European values, which suggest a migration policy based on solidarity, it should also take into account economic and cultural elements as well as the traditional historical ties between some EU Member States and the migrants' countries of origin.

In the second chapter of the book Dariusz Milczarek analyses the evolution of Poland's influence on the development of the EU's eastern policy. The author wonders about the effectiveness of EU's policy towards the East in the context of the situation in Ukraine. It seems that the main difficulty lies in setting common goals that would be accepted by all the EU Member States. The author analyses in detail various concepts concerning the territory to be covered, and finally chooses the best one, as it seems: the 'policy towards Eastern Europe'. Next, he presents the genesis of the EU's eastern policy, highlighting key dates, logical links between events and global reactions to crucial and historic phenomena taking place in the region in question. It should also be noted and commended that the author presents a multifaceted approach to the aforementioned events, showing the degree of significance from the point of view of various actors, including the European Union, NATO, Russia.

What seems particularly interesting and innovative is the concept of division of the EU's eastern policy into the Eastern Partnership and the strategic partnership with Russia. Based on the research objectives described in the introduction, the author focuses mainly on the first pillar; this highlights the need to conduct further studies on the relations between the EU and Russia. He examines the principles, institutions and mechanisms of the Eastern Partnership. The article suggests that from the economic point of view association agreements and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area are very important constituents of the Eastern Partnership. Even though this chapter does not focus on economic aspects, the author has outlined the principal elements of liberalisation of trade, which has proved to be the main contentious issue between the EU and Russia, and has also addressed visa issues as a subject of key importance for ordinary people and their perception of the everyday effects of rapprochement between Eastern European countries and the EU.

Of particular note is the exceptionally clear presentation of Poland's role as an initiator and executor of the EU's eastern policy. The author discusses Poland's involvement in the development and promotion of this policy, which seems by all means justified, but also, which is worth

noting, presents a specific interpretation of the concept of 'executor of the EU's eastern policy'. It would seem that it is the European Union as a whole, as an international organisation, that should be the only executor of its own foreign policy. However, the author managed to superbly identify the 'executor' – Poland as well as the 'means of execution' and the instruments used. This is one of few attempts at implementing the concept of Poland as a country that initiates and Europeanises this policy, in the form of EU policy, and then almost independently implements its instruments. The chapter concludes in a review of the main achievements and failures. The author objectively identifies and analyses their consequences. It is noteworthy, however, that he managed to excellently link the difficulties in implementing the eastern policy to their causes, both those encountered by Poland alone and those faced by the EU as a whole. In the conclusions, the author identifies and evaluates both the positive and the negative opinions on the effectiveness of the EU's eastern policy. Towards the end of the chapter, he very aptly notes that given the current political configuration in Europe, Poland has a historic opportunity to become a bridge between the western and northern part of the continent (to which it already formally belongs) and a number of Eastern European countries.

When analysing Poland's situation in the EU and in the international arena, it is difficult not to mention the regional dimension. In this context, the choice of the excellent chapter by Artur Adamczyk for this book ('Cooperation of the Visegrad Group Member Countries within the European Union: Experiences and Challenges for Poland') should be highly praised. The author of the chapter briefly presents the genesis of the Visegrad Group (or the Visegrad Four – V4) and then moves on to identify the main subjects and forms of the V4's cooperation in the European Union. He observes that even though the V4 was established for both economic and political reasons, after the accession to the EU it soon turned out that it was hard to find common areas for joint action and common long-term goals that would cement the cooperation between the four countries within in the European Union. Unfortunately, however, the more the V4 countries analysed the intricacies of EU policies and the details of the decisions contained in EU legislation, the more their national interests differed. Moreover, concerned about the possible dominance of Poland as the largest partner in the grouping, the other three countries of the Visegrad Group (Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Hungary) have been looking at many Polish initiatives with great reserve.

Despite those difficulties, the author has managed to identify some common areas of cooperation between the Visegrad Group countries: ne-

gotiations of the 2007–2013 financial perspective, the eastern dimension of EU policy, elements of the European energy policy and of the climate & energy package. In this context, the author has identified the key national interests of the V4 countries and the extent of their possible and actual cooperation and has precisely analysed the actions of the Polish diplomacy, specifying their scope, nature and targets – not only among the Visegrad Group but among all the EU Member States – and highlighting the possible areas where success has been achieved as well as the final results. What is particularly important is that the text is not limited to a mere analysis of the situation and positions of the V4 countries towards the problems, especially within the framework of the Eastern Partnership, but it also presents the broader international context, taking into account the opinions and actions of the other interested EU and non-EU countries.

A particularly noteworthy aspect of the text is that the analysis takes into account the concepts that could negatively impact the coherence of the Visegrad Group, for example the Danube cooperation project between Romania and Austria. Furthermore, the author presents in a detailed and precise manner the potential challenges to further cooperation of the Visegrad Group within the European Union: the conflict in Ukraine and the attempt to develop a coherent common EU position on that issue. Another aspect of particular note is the carefully weighed presentation of the position of Poland and the other V4 countries towards the European Union's sanctions against Russia. This was especially difficult because of the multitude of positions, many changes and modifications introduced and the new emerging concepts, but the author managed to tackle the problem with great success, skilfully positioning the highly divergent positions of the V4 countries on the timeline of the European Union's key decisions in this field. At the end of the chapter, the author very aptly observes that his analysis of the functioning of the Visegrad Group has shown that it is most certainly visible in the EU but not necessarily very effective.

The next text, 'Poland in the European Union: a decade of successes or problems? From the perspective of the use of EU funds' by Przemysław Dubel, is the start of a slightly different research approach. It has been devoted to the impact of European funds in Poland. It highlights both the positive and the negative effects of supporting social projects financed from EU funds in Poland, and to this aim it places the measures implemented in Poland in the broadly defined context of the EU's regional policy. The author points out the significance of regional policy as a platform for cooperation between government administration and local authorities. It should be noted, however, that the concepts of spending European funds on the regional level should be consulted at least with their

ultimate beneficiaries: entrepreneurs, whose resourcefulness determines economic growth, socioeconomic development, creation of new jobs and the implementation of innovative solutions.

Furthermore, the author aptly observes that the objectives of regional policy defined at the EU level include both promoting competition and eliminating inequalities between regions. Indeed, this concept seems to be right, albeit very difficult to implement; because it is still being debated in the field of economics what relation there actually is between increasing entrepreneurs' capability of competing in international markets and an increase in economic growth that facilitates the 'catching up' with the better developed regions of the EU (convergence). The next parts of the chapter have been devoted to presenting the available and already spent amounts from European funds under the 2004–2006 and 2007–2013 perspectives.

Finally, the chapter discusses the main barriers to the use of European funds. The research conducted by the author has revealed the main factors that restrict the freedom of operation of companies receiving EU funds. It is worth noting, however, that the considerable administrative and financial requirements concerning the potential beneficiaries of European funds as public funds should ensure proper and effective use of the taxpayer's money. At the end of the chapter the author points out that the barriers generate additional costs for both the beneficiaries and the institutions that hold the competitions and implement the projects; so far, however, no institution has attempted to estimate them. This observation is by all means an invitation to conduct further interesting studies on the issue.

The next chapter, titled 'Convergence and competitiveness problems for the Polish economy in the European Union', continues the discussion on the influence of Poland's accession to the European Union on its economy. Kazimierz Ryc, puts forward theses about EU membership having considerable influence on the competitiveness of the Polish economy and the need to join the euro area. Evidence supporting these observations is provided in subsequent parts of the chapter, in which the author points out, among others, that price competitiveness is no longer a clear incentive for investment in Poland.

The author's definitive statement about the invisible hand of the free market that has improperly guided investments and – more broadly – capital flows is at least dubious; instead of convergence there was in fact divergence. It is rather obvious that capital moves to more profitable locations, which leads to an increase in overall prosperity but at the cost of growing disproportions on the regional level.

In the following part of the chapter, the author discusses the consequences of the uneven development levels and the lack of real convergence. He further presents a rather controversial opinion about the negative impact on the South, leading to the loss of some sales markets and to deindustrialisation, as well as that open economy benefits only the North. However, he also very aptly observes that the economic crisis in fact exposed the weakness of the economies of many countries.

The next part of this chapter has been devoted to the description and analysis of Polish opinions on the euro area and Poland's participation in this undertaking. In order to ensure that the disquisition is as clear as possible, the author has performed a thorough analysis of a report of the National Bank of Poland, taking into account GDP levels, production costs and prices of the factors of production, flexibility of the labour market, and the consequences of giving up on the national competences in monetary policy. One very interesting part of the study focuses the question: if not the euro, then what?, and the author should be commended for presenting a broad overview of the main theses and proposals concerning Poland's participation in the euro area.

Finally, the author aptly observes that we should support the integration of the European Union around the common currency because, first, it already exists, and second, the global economy needs the euro.

The next chapter of the book has been dedicated to Polish trade within the EU. The chapter, authored by G. Tchorek and J. Czaja, is an analysis of the trade flows from Poland to the European Union against the background of the trade exchange of the Visegrad Group. The approach adopted by the authors seems to be just right and very relevant. Poland's cooperation with the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary, which began in the early period of the system transformation, has led to many positive joint actions in the international arena, including in Europe. However, despite political consent to close cooperation, we are still more often than not dealing with negative competition rather than examples of positive actions. And in this light the analysis of Poland's trade compared with the other members of the Visegrad Group provides very valuable insight.

In the first part of the chapter, the authors present a thorough review of the theoretical literature on trade openness and diversification and specialisation in production and export. They address the issue of the relation between trade and GDP, highlighting two approaches focusing on either specialisation or diversification of production and trade. Furthermore, they show how the application of gravity models of international trade reveals the factors that affect bilateral trade exchange: the size of the economies and the distance between them.

The second part of this chapter has been devoted to the main currents in studies of the movement of goods and investments in the Visegrad Group countries. The analysis covered a total of 27 studies, including 19 peer-reviewed; the selection is very broad and highly relevant and includes studies by Polish and foreign researchers, using various methods and models and focusing on various timeframes. Based on the review, the authors formulated three main conclusions concerning the post-accession period: (a) there has been distinct increase of the trade exchange between the V4 countries and the other members of the EU, (b) the significance of intra-industry trade has increased, stimulated mainly by the influx of foreign direct investment, and (c) the diversity of goods has grown and price competition is becoming less important.

In the next part the authors conduct an analysis of Poland's position in the intra-EU trade. Finally, they formulate very good conclusions concerning both global trade and the trade within the Visegrad Group. They observe that the significance of Polish trade in the international arena has been growing in a relatively quick and constant pace (despite the crisis). According to them, this results from the still existing price competition, Poland's strong ties to EU countries and the relatively high share of industry in its GDP. The study ends in a meticulous presentation of the data concerning the influx of foreign direct investment (FDI) to Poland as compared to the other countries of the Visegrad Group, where the authors also stress the relationship between FDI and the share of economies and entrepreneurs in the value chain. It would seem, however, that these preliminary conclusions should encourage further analyses in this field.

The next chapter is devoted to Poland's energy security. Bartłomiej Nowak clearly counts energy security among the fundamental elements constituting general security, including economic security of the state. The author begins his analysis with the presentation of the legal basis, moving on to the main socioeconomic problems: ensuring the security of supply and maintaining reasonable prices for recipients and users. Furthermore, the author emphasises the political nature of the concept of energy security and the international dimension of the activities in this area.

The main part of the chapter is, however, devoted to the economic impact of energy security in Poland and stresses the direct connection with economic development. The author thus performs an analysis of the past and present demand for gas and on this basis formulates conclusions regarding the future demand for this resource. But the analysis covers demand as well, as a vital element of the market; in this context the author discusses the position of operators in Poland and identifies the potential

outcome of the attempts to extract shale gas. The past and present regulations as well as the preliminary steps taken by private investors could suggest potential influence of the availability of shale gas on Poland's energy security.

In the next part, the author analyses the concept of energy security, its practical implementation and the past and present implications for the leading economies of the world (the US, Germany, France, the UK). It is noteworthy that the author linked the policy of diversification of resources with the shale gas deposits and the concepts of shale gas extraction, but he also highlighted other instruments and measures that should get rid of the monoculture of supply of energy resources and boost energy security: (a) introduction of innovative technologies, (b) establishment of mandatory reserves, (c) development of energy infrastructure, (d) conclusion of international agreements. With the above guidelines, the author performs a very thorough and critical analysis of the concept of energy security as presented in Polish government documents, including in *Poland's Energy Policy until 2030*. On this basis he formulates the conclusion about the need for close cooperation between state authorities and entrepreneurs to ensure the country's energy security.

The economic deliberations on the consequences of Poland's membership in the European Union end with the very interesting chapter by Małgorzata Winter on managing public finance. This is a particularly important issue given Poland's accession to the European Union because as a Member State Poland must fulfil a number of requirements concerning public finance: from the obligation to contribute to European funds, through the prohibition of state aid that would distort competition, to financial stability requirements related to the membership in the economic and monetary union. In this context, the author stresses the need to move from spending to managing public finance in Poland, which requires innovative implementation of the classic management functions: planning, decision-making, organisation, leadership and control.

The author performs a detailed review of the legislative developments concerning budgetary control, starting with the first regulations of 1989, to the solutions from the period of the financial and economic crisis – 2008–2010. On this basis, she aptly observes that there was no radical change in public finance control on the macro level following Poland's accession to the EU, but new solutions were indeed introduced on the micro level (individual institutions) because of EU requirements, primarily regarding internal audit. These changes opened the way to the introduction of modern solutions applied in international institutions, also in accordance with the European Commission's requirements.

Furthermore, the author has performed a detailed analysis of the notion of internal audit, explaining the concept and execution of verification of the internal assessment of financial management in various bodies. She has not only examined the Polish Public Finance Law and its amendments but also presented internal audit practice in Poland.

To sum up, I can say with full conviction that the book *The European Union and Poland – Problems and Achievements*, edited by Artur Adamczyk and Przemysław Dubel, contains many topics interesting for both academic discussion and economic practice. Many publications analysing the consequences of European integration for Poland have appeared on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of accession to the European Union; this book, however, stands out for a number of reasons. First of all, it is interdisciplinary and allows the readers to discover the political, legal, social, and economic impact of Poland's accession to the EU. Second, the book presents the results of studies and assesses the effects of deeper European integration in areas such as institutional and economic cooperation with the Visegrad Group. It also describes the effects of Polish initiatives in areas of particular importance for the country: the Eastern partnership and energy security. With this, the publication fills a considerable gap in the academic literature on Poland's membership of the EU, and despite the diversity of approaches, research methods and the subjects analysed, the authors managed to ensure that the layout is coherent and logical and the message conveyed to the readers is clear.

Another particularly noteworthy aspect of the publication is that the conclusions and recommendations contained in it are original and unconventional, based on a solid analysis of the available theoretical literature, reviews of the papers published on these issues so far and on the authors' own research. Consequently, the book is not just a guide to selected aspects of Poland's membership of the EU; it presents an intellectual challenge sparking further debates and research on the proposed topics. As a result, every reader of this publication will receive precise and reliable knowledge as well as suggestions for further research in the complex subject matter of European integration.

Adam A. Ambroziak
Warsaw School of Economics