

President of Ukraine
and NATO Secretary
General visit SGH

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Modern green
zone on the SGH
campus

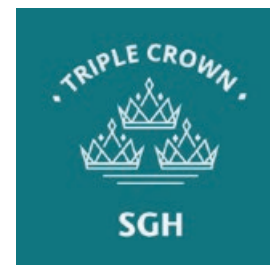
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Scientists and research



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I am truly delighted with the accreditation AACSB we have received – this is a tremendous honour for our university. With this achievement, the SGH Warsaw School of Economics joins the ranks of the world's leading business schools. It serves as both recognition of our efforts and a strong motivation for continued growth and improvement. This is a joyful and significant moment for the entire SGH community. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to everyone who contributed to this accomplishment.

It is with great satisfaction that I received the news concerning the AACSB accreditation awarded to the SGH Warsaw School of Economics in April. This third accreditation, following the EQUIS and AMBA accreditations obtained before, is the culmination of a several-year process significantly participated by my closest associates, but also the entire SGH community together with our graduates and business representatives associated in the Partners Club. I am extremely grateful to them for that. With the AACSB accreditation, our University enters the elite club of business schools that can boast the so-called triple crown, i.e. three prestigious accreditations. Each of them separately and

all of them together are a great distinction for our University. Thanks to this achievement, the SGH Warsaw School of Economics joins the group of leading business schools in the world.

Since the very first moments of my tenure as Rector, when my first term began in October 2020, my primary goal has been to win the triple crown accreditation. The challenge itself taken up by participating in accreditation processes contributes to building and consolidating an SGH positive image in the international arena, allowing us to show the scope and quality of activities undertaken by our University staff to the external stakeholders. The accreditation process is extremely dynamic, as the quality standards of business schools are constantly evolving to adapt to new educational models, changing expectations of students, the social environment of universities and cooperation with it, and the pace of development of advanced technologies, including AI. The AACSB accreditation is also a call for further development and improvement. This is a joyful and important moment for the entire SGH community. Let me once again express my sincere appreciation to all who contributed to this achievement.



PIOTR WACHOWIAK
Rector of the SGH Warsaw School of Economics, about AACSB accreditation



KAROLINA CYGONEK
Editor-in-Chief
and the editorial team

The process of granting international accreditations consists in the evaluation of teaching, research achievements as well as university management. The university builds its position and prestige at home and abroad, also thanks to these elements, and accreditation is a kind of stamp of quality that attracts new domestic and foreign students to the university. Such a mark of quality of the SGH Warsaw School of Economics is the triple crown accreditation (p. 3), which our University won obtaining the American AACSB accreditation.

The main theme of the newest issue of "SGH Magazine" is research and initiatives carried out at SGH as well as profiles of selected scientists, without whom these activities would not be possible. Let me encourage you to read the texts about it on pages 40–53.

The last few years in the history of SGH have been an extraordinary time, reflecting the era in which we live, full of unknowns, instability and multiple threats, from the COVID-19 pandemic to the migration crisis to the war in Ukraine. In the 2024/2025 academic year, SGH has become the venue of unprecedented visits by the most important figures in world politics: the Secretary General of NATO and the President of Ukraine. Details to be found on pages 14–21.

SGH is developing in many dimensions, internationally (pp. 7–13) and infrastructurally – the SGH campus has been expanded by a modern green building of the Centre for Innovative Space (p. 24).

A university is created primarily by people and the initiatives they undertake. I recommend the entire People and Events section, in which we talk about the planned flight of a Pole into space and the Academic Space Network, economic congresses in which SGH participates as a content partner and about monthly student debates broadcast on Polish Television on topics bothering the young generation entering the labour market. We could not fail to break the latest news in this issue of our magazine – the conferment of an honorary doctorate to the Rector of the SGH Warsaw School of Economics by the Kyiv National Economic University (KNEU).

Eminent economists write about the development of the Polish economy, commenting on the OECD report "Poland 2025" (p. 58). You cannot miss the text by Professor Jan Toporowski, an eminent British economist, who is also an expert on Michał Kalecki (1899–1970), a world-famous economist, a collaborator of John Maynard Keynes (p. 78). The year 2025 has been designated the "Year of Professor Michał Kalecki" at SGH.

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SGH Warsaw School of Economics is the oldest economic university in Poland and one of the most renowned academic centres in Central and Eastern Europe. It has been "shaping the leaders of the future" for about 119 years, while conducting comprehensive scientific research in the field of economics, data analysis, e-business and economic law. It also prepares expert reports for companies, public institutions and local government units. SGH consistently ranks high in university rankings. Since 2017, SGH has held an AMBA accreditation; in 2021 it received the prestigious EQUIS accreditation, and in 2022 it was also granted the BSIS certification. In April 2025, SGH obtained the AACSB accreditation and it joined a very small group of economic universities in the world with

a triple crown (AACSB, AMBA, EQUIS). Joining the CIVICA European University alliance in 2022, which includes 10 most prestigious European universities in the field of social sciences, in particular in economics, has given a new dimension to international academic cooperation of the university. The SGH Warsaw School of Economics maintains very close links with business. In 2023, the SGH Partners Club, which brings together 43 Polish and international companies, celebrated its 25th anniversary. SGH, being an independent university supporting the balanced development of society and the economy, shapes civic and ethical attitudes through its teaching, research and opinion-forming activities.

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International accreditations as an example of best practice in university management

 MARCIN WOJTYSIAK-KOTLARSKI

 On 18 April 2025, AACSB International officially announced that the SGH Warsaw School of Economics received the AACSB accreditation. Thus, SGH has joined a very small group of economic universities in the world with a triple crown, i.e. three most important accreditations: AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business), EQUIS (European Quality Improvement System), and AMBA (Association of MBAs).

According to the current data, there are only 136 triple-accredited higher education institutions. It is estimated that only about 1% of business schools in the world belong to this elite group.

For our university, winning the triple crown was one of the key strategic goals that we have been consistently pursuing for several years. We obtained the AMBA accreditation in 2016, then the EQUIS accreditation in 2021, and now – in 2025 – the AACSB accreditation. We are very pleased with this success. Major international accreditations confirm a high SGH status on the map of world business schools.

We have achieved this together, thanks to the involvement of many stakeholder groups: teaching and administrative staff, students and doctoral students, business representatives, alumni, members of the University Board and members of the International Advisory Board. Naturally, this success would not have been possible without the support

“We have won a triple crown,”

Habilitated Doctor Marcin Wojtysiak-Kotlarski, Professor at SGH, Head of the SGH Team for AACSB, EQUIS and BGA Accreditations, writes about the experience from the implementation of accreditation projects, which provide an opportunity to benchmark with the best university management practices in the world, and also about plans for the future.



SGH top leadership as well as the coordinating role of the accreditation team. We can all be extremely proud of this achievement.

International accreditation is a topic which many people seem to consider mysterious. This text is intended to bring it closer to the academic community and to invite a wide range of stakeholders of our University to cooperate in this area. Accreditation (from French *accréditer*) means – if translated directly – granting a power of attorney. The term accreditation refers to a procedure in which an authorised body issues a statement that the entity is competent to perform specific tasks.

In general, the accreditation processes in the best contemporary educational institutions consist in decisions made by universities to voluntarily undergo the assessment of institutions considered to be the world's leaders in this area. They do this in the belief that accreditation successes make their universities more credible in the eyes of students from all over the world who are looking for the most valuable educational opportunities for themselves. In this sense, the most important accreditations undoubtedly have an important strategic aspect related to competition on the higher education market.

SGH is one of the leading business schools in Central and Eastern Europe. At our university – in addition to courses closely related to management, accounting and corporate business – there is also a well developed component of economic and social sciences, which educate our students in a broader sense. For the community of our Alma Mater, it is extremely important to provide students with knowledge not only narrowly focused on running businesses and making money. The process of shaping leaders is one of the foundations of our university identity.

It is also worth noting here that the AACSB and EQUIS accreditations differ from the AMBA accreditations. The former two are institutional as they concern all processes implemented at universities. AMBA accreditation is focused on the review of MBA portfolio. The field of interest of institutional accreditation is also to some extent the performance of universities as part of all processes they deal with. In other words, when a school decides to go through these accreditation processes, it is subject to a holistic comprehensive assessment.

When preparing the university for accreditation, we carry out, for example, self-assessment processes consisting in checking whether SGH performs in accordance with the best management practices in such areas as strategic management, portfolio of programmes, planning and implementation of research, support for academic teachers, students and university administrative staff, internationalisation of activities or cooperation with stakeholders aimed at achieving a positive impact on the environment.

In modern business schools, including the SGH Warsaw School of Economics, an important part of the educational offer is programmes prepared and implemented for top managers or for people experienced in running companies. For SGH, executive education is of utmost importance. As we all know, we have a very rich, largest portfolio of postgraduate studies in Poland (over 160 different types of study programmes), as well as four MBA programmes. Taking this into account, SGH has also decided to pursue the AMBA accreditation, the subject of which is narrower than the



EQUIS and AACSB accreditations, as it primarily concerns the portfolio of MBA programmes.

We have also enjoyed numerous successes in this area. Suffice it to say that the AMBA accreditation was the first of the accreditations to make up the triple crown we have won. In principle, however, this should not come as a surprise, because our University has always been very strong when it comes to understanding the reality of cooperation between business and academia. It is reflected, for example, in a wide range of educational offer, which is highest rated by the market, the education which is practical and up-to-date in terms of transferring knowledge or developing skills and competences.

The AACSB and EQUIS accreditations have a much broader overall scope than AMBA's and require coordination of activities in the context of virtually the entire university. For this reason, it was decided that the AACSB and EQUIS accreditation team should be established at our university to be headed by the author of this text so as to include in it people who are most involved in the accreditation work. On the other hand, the key contribution to preparing the University for the AMBA accreditation has so far been made by the MBA Programme Office, which resulted from the fact that, as a matter of principle, it is the accreditation focused on the analysis of practices related to the management of this particular part of the university curriculum. Recently, due to the decision made by the authorities, SGH implemented a new, combined AMBA & BGA accreditation (the accreditation team also cooperated with the management of the MBA Programmes Office).

SGH efforts to earn accreditation do not end accreditation projects; they only constitute the initial stage. After obtaining accreditation for the first time, the school launches a reaccreditation cycle, whose aim is to further strive for improvement. For example, in 2024, we (i.e. SGH) completed

the EQUIS reaccreditation project. In May 2024, we hosted on our campus the EQUIS reaccreditation committee, chaired by Prof. Konstantin Krotov, Dean of the SKEMA business school (campus in Raleigh, North Carolina, USA). Other members of the evaluation committee included Prof. Mats Brenner, former Dean of the School of Entrepreneurship and Management (LUSEM) at Lund University in Sweden, Prof. Paul Ballentine, Dean of the University of Canterbury Business School in New Zealand and Cibet Setinkaya, former partner at Deloitte in Türkiye, representing the business world.

Accreditation or reaccreditation visits are very large undertakings. There were about two hundred participants in the EQUIS reaccreditation meetings, including representatives of all stakeholder groups: SGH authorities, members of the University Board, teaching staff, students of all types of studies, administrative staff as well as graduates and companies cooperating with SGH.

The EQUIS reaccreditation visit was a great success. At the summing-up meeting held in the SGH Rector's office, the Chair of the Reaccreditation Committee pointed to many strengths of our University. As the entire academic community of SGH, we were praised for the systematic development of our Alma Mater, which was confirmed on 24 September 2024 by Prof. Alfons Sauquet, who told us about the decision of the Accreditation Board of EFMD (European Foundation for Management Development) to extend the SGH accreditation for another three years.

By their nature, accreditation processes are collaborative team efforts, so in no way can individuals determine success in this area. I would like to express my sincere thanks to all those who supported this reaccreditation visit in any way and those who are more broadly involved in accreditation, regardless of what kind of support they offer. Accreditation success is our shared achievement and each member of the SGH family has a share in it and each of them may be proud of it.

The summer period of 2024 was – apart from the EQUIS reaccreditation project – also very important and busy as we (i.e. SGH) were completing the AACSB accreditation project. The EQUIS and AACSB accreditation projects are slightly different, although they also have many similarities. The similarities include what I have mentioned before, i.e. both accreditations are institutional and concern generally all aspects of university activities.

A characteristic feature of the AACSB accreditation is that before the major accreditation visit, which in our case took place in January 2025, there had been the so-called pre-visit paid by the head of the accreditation PRT; this time Professor Thomas Cleff, Dean of the Business School at the University of Pforzheim in Germany.

The professor's pre-visit took place at our University between 7 and 9 July 2024. Interestingly, the AACSB accreditation clearly encourages universities to be permanently in touch with the head of the accreditation committee during the completion of the accreditation project. The visit should let us remember the expectations of what the university should focus on when preparing for the main visit. In particular, it is about considering various types of suggestions on how to prepare the final versions of the documents that make up the broad package of information about the school, worked out and submitted to the accreditation institution in the course of the project.



JACEK PROKOP,
Vice Rector for International
Relations, SGH

Accreditation processes give us a unique opportunity to more deeply reflect on our Alma Mater. The preparation of documents and accreditation visits make us stronger, but also make us aware that there are some areas for improvement.

Accreditations are not a one-time phenomenon, they are a continuous process of improvement in all areas of the university operation. The participation in accreditation processes allows us to present on the international forum the scope and quality of activities undertaken by our university staff, building at the same time the awareness of how important the accreditation is among the SGH community.

Internationally accredited schools (AACSB, EQUIS, AMBA) are pioneers in teaching, research and social impact. Thanks to obtaining AACSB, we have won the so-called third accreditation crown and thus confirmed our strong position of a business schools leader. It is worth noting that the quality standards of business schools are constantly evolving, adapting to new educational models, ever-changing business needs, diverse requirements of lifelong learners as well as the rapid pace of development of new increasingly advanced technologies. The recent changes to AACSB standards emphasise the importance of the positive impact of business education on society.

International accreditations contribute to the increase in number of potential students, especially from geographically and culturally distant countries and to the development of research cooperation with the world's leading business schools.

While coordinating work of all the people at our University involved in the preparation of the final versions of documents to be submitted to AACSB, we carefully analysed the comments and remarks made by the head of the accreditation PRT. We are very grateful for these suggestions as they further improved the previously prepared drafts.

Incidentally, it may be noted that the entire information package for AACSB contains several dozen files containing several hundred pages of information about our University. Working on such a package of documents requires a lot of attention and professional judgment regarding what to focus on, what to emphasise and what to praise. Sometimes it is a big challenge for SGH due to a very wide scope of activities conducted by the University in various fields. SGH is simply a very large university with a huge positive impact on the environment, so in our case – in some aspects of accreditation projects – the problem is that not everything may be referred to.

All key issues concerning the content of the documents are discussed with the relevant persons responsible for each area of SGH operation, and the most important matters or those requiring decisions are presented to the top management. At the end of the process, the Rector accepts the prepared documents and sends them to AACSB on behalf of SGH through a special IT system. In the context of completion of the AACSB accreditation project, we are happy to have sent the documents on 14 August 2024, i.e. more than a week before the deadline, despite the holiday period.

The culminating point in the schedule of our recent accreditation activities was undoubtedly the AACSB major accreditation visit. It took place exactly on 19–22 January 2025. Interestingly, we had set the date of this visit more than a year before its implementation (in November 2023). Besides Prof. Thomas Cleff, head of our evaluation committee, we also had the honour of hosting Prof. Metka Tekavčič – Dean of the School of Economics and Business at the University of Ljubljana (Slovenia) as well as Prof. Washika Haak-Saheem – Dean of Dubai Business School (United Arab Emirates).

A group of these experienced professionals got familiar with details of the SGH performance and also provided us with recommendations to be accounted for in the future. It is one of the most valuable aspects of acting among the best business universities, as it provides an opportunity to benchmark with leading universities, to mutually inspire each other with interesting initiatives and projects and also to give something to the international community. The committee declared that SGH operated in accordance with the AACSB standards and made a recommendation to award accreditation to our University. This recommendation was subsequently approved in accordance with applicable procedures at AACSB International.

At an important conference in Providence (Rhode Island, USA), as an AACSB volunteer I had the pleasure to talk about how SGH supports the student community, about numerous student organisations, which create an extremely friendly place to improve knowledge and skills, but also – probably most importantly – a space for the development of social competences of our students. I will never forget the impression my presentation made on the representatives of American business schools. It turned

out, as I concluded from a number of conversations held after my speech, that the activities of our university aimed at supporting student organisations must have been unknown to the audience then. Thus, this is one of the examples showing SGH as an inspiration and our practices and activities as an issue for reflection for others.

The accreditation projects in which SGH participates provide an opportunity to use an extremely abundant network of professionals who are really willing to share their experiences, problems, challenges, successes, etc. We are grateful that as a university we can participate in various types of events organised by accreditation organisations. AACSB or EFMD, which endorses EQUIS accreditation, organise annual meetings and accreditation conferences participated by us.

In 2024 – for example – the AACSB annual conference, the so-called International Conference & Annual Meeting (ICAM) was held in April in the US, in Atlanta, the largest city in Georgia. In 2025, a similar conference was held from 6 to 9 April 2025 in Vienna.

It is worth mentioning that such events as the AACSB annual conference may gather about 1300 delegates from about eighty countries from all over the world. It demonstrates the global reach of this organisation and its countless new professional relationships, given the large number of nearly 2000 AACSB members and more than 150,000 faculty working in all of its affiliated business schools.

With such a global community, each member of the SGH family – belonging to faculty or administrative staff – can cooperate using the possibility of logging in to a digital platform called The Exchange ([HTTPS://THEEXCHANGE.AACSB.EDU/HOME](https://theexchange.aacsb.edu/home)); created exclusively for AACSB members, The Exchange is a global online forum that allows SGH to communicate directly and share resources with professionals from other universities.

It is worth emphasising that the implementation of the most important international accreditation projects at and for the SGH Warsaw School of Economics is consistently supported by the university authorities led by the SGH Rector, Habilitated Doctor Piotr Wachowiak, Professor at SGH. As the accreditation team, we would not be able to effectively carry out our activities if it were not for the trust and kindness of the Vice Rector for International Cooperation, Habilitated Doctor Jacek Prokop, Professor at SGH. I also remember the earlier decision made by the then Rector of the Warsaw School of Economics, Professor Marek Rocki, who put emphasis on the triple crown as one of the key goals of our Alma Mater and gave the opportunity to gradually professionalise the accreditation function at the university. I would like to thank them all for the support and trust. 🇵🇱

HABILITATED DOCTOR MARCIN WOJTYSIAK-KOTLARSKI, Professor at SGH, Head of the Unit of International Strategies, Institute of Management, Collegium of Management and Finance of the SGH Warsaw School of Economics, Head of SGH Team for AACSB, EQUIS, BGA Accreditations.



PHOTO: MARIUSZ SIELSKI

Cooperation with OECD

New opportunities for students Presentation of the report on Poland

 AGNIESZKA KÜHNL-KINEL

On 25 October 2024, SGH Rector Piotr Wachowiak and OECD Deputy Secretary General Yoshiaki Takeushi signed a cooperation agreement between the SGH Warsaw School of Economics and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in Paris. SGH was thus the first university in Poland to join the group of such excellent OECD partner schools as Sciences Po in Paris and Bocconi University in Milan.

The OECD is an intergovernmental organisation grouping thirty six countries. Its activities are primarily aimed at promoting sustainable growth policies and raising living standards in the member states and working together for sustainable development in third countries in accordance with the principle of non-discrimination and international commitments. It provides a platform where member state governments can tackle the challenges of globalisation together and exchange experiences related to new phenomena such as ageing populations, digital economy and climate change.

A closer cooperation with the OECD will not only facilitate access to the latest analyses and reports prepared by this organisation for employees and students at our University, but above all will allow them to actively participate in their development as experts and thus influence the shaping of modern economic, financial and social policies

at the global level. It should be emphasised that the agreement results from the activities carried out by the SGH staff of the International Centre (CWM) as part of the project “SGH_Expert_Network: building the capacity of the SGH Warsaw School of Economics in the field of internationalisation based on a network of experts”, financed by the Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange (NAWA) under the programme “Welcome to Poland”. Thanks are also due to the staff of the Permanent Representation of the Republic of Poland to the OECD, in particular to Ewa Kubel, Deputy Permanent Representative and Joanna Smenda-Martyka, who contributed significantly to the signing of this agreement.

The main objective of the agreement is to enable SGH students and graduates to complete paid internships and build a career path in this organisation. The OECD runs several internship programmes such as the Young Associate Programme for undergraduate students and the OECD Internship Programme. The agreement applies primarily to the latter programme, as students of partner universities are treated as a priority when considering applications for internships. In addition, our University will be able to pre-select fifteen candidates according to the criteria specified by the OECD.

The OECD Internship Programme is an opportunity to complete an internship with this organisation. The programme is primarily aimed at master's and doctoral students, however, applications from undergraduate students are also considered. Internships last from one to six months, with the possibility of extending to twelve months in total. The condition is that you have citizenship of one of the OECD member states and are fluent in English. French is not required, though welcome, as it lets you to fully enjoy staying in Paris. Interns receive financial support in the cost of living.


And what are the benefits of an internship at the OECD for a student? First of all, it allows students to improve their analytical skills in an international environment. Interns will support policy analysts, attend meetings and seminars, and even conduct independent research. Its less obvious goal is also to show the possibility of building a career in an international organisation, which is not always the first choice of our graduates, who usually associate their professional future with work for large corporations or in banking.

The first preselection of candidates conducted by the CWM ended in March 2025. The next one is planned for autumn.

The relations established thanks to the agreement also resulted in visits of guests to the headquarters of our University. On 5 December 2024, we had the pleasure of hosting Ambassador Ewa Kubel and Martin Wassermann, Talent Management analyst at the OECD, at SGH. They met the research staff and students. The meeting was

organised as part of the aforementioned project “SGH_Expert_Network: building the capacity of the SGH Warsaw School of Economics in the field of internationalisation based on a network of experts”, it focused on issues related to scientific and research cooperation, on joint projects and conferences, but it also familiarised SGH students with career development paths and internships – the latter not only in the OECD itself, but also in the Permanent Representation of the Republic of Poland.

An important and very prestigious event was the presentation of the latest OECD Economic Survey of Poland 2025, which took place on 4 February 2025 at our University. The OECD Economic Report for Poland is published every two years. Its aim is a multifaceted assessment of the state of our country's economy, analysis of basic growth indicators, the financial system, the labour market, wage dynamics, and the state of the SME sector. It is a highly valued and objective source of information that also includes recommendations for the future. The report was first announced at the headquarters of the Ministry of Development and Technology, from where the OECD representatives came to our University to present it to a wider audience, including students. The meeting at SGH began with the presentation of the main findings of the report by co-author of the report, Zuzana Smidova. This year's report focused on topics related to sustainable development, green economy and health sector. The presentation was accompanied by an expert panel entitled “OECD Economic Survey of Poland 2025 – towards recovery and sustainable growth”, moderated by Dr. Eliza Przeździecka, Professor at SGH, participated by Deputy Minister of Health Katarzyna Kacperczyk, OECD Chief Economist Alvaro Pereira and his advisor Tomasz Koźluk, as well as SGH researchers Dr. Piotr Maszczyk and Dr. Maciej Cygler. This year's OECD Economic Survey of Poland was the 18th report on the state of our economy prepared by the OECD.

A closer cooperation with the OECD means not only the prestige of being among the best economic universities in the world that are partners of this organisation but above all measurable benefits for our community: easier access to internship programmes for students and graduates and easier access to the latest publications, reports and analyses for our employees. In April, CWM will also organise study visits for members of the SGH_Expert_Network network in this organisation, which will certainly result in a number of joint research projects. 

DOCTOR AGNIESZKA KÜHNL-KINEL, SGH International Centre

SGH_Expert_Network

 AGNIESZKA KÜHNL-KINEL

The second stage of the project “SGH_Expert_Network – building the potential of the Warsaw School of Economics in the field of internationalisation based on a network of experts” has been completed. The SGH Warsaw School of Economics was visited by representatives of international financial and economic organisations: EBRD, OECD, IMF and Eurostat.

In the last two months of 2024 and at the beginning of 2025, the project team not only invited academics and students to a series of webinars devoted to the possibilities of cooperation with selected financial and economic organisations with a global reach, but also guests representing these organisations, which gave the opportunity to establish personal contacts. The project is implemented at the International Centre of the Warsaw School of Economics (CWM) and financed by the Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange (NAWA) as part of the programme “Welcome to Poland”, and its main objective is to promote the scientific potential of our University in the international arena, especially in six organisations selected for the project purposes: the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the World Bank (UK), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the European Statistical Office (Eurostat).

The first to visit SGH were Dr. Piotr Szpunar, Director representing Poland, Bulgaria and Albania in EBRD and Konrad Wilczak, Deputy Regional Director for Poland and the Baltic States at the EBRD Warsaw office. During the meeting on 28 November 2024, our guests presented the bank activities and cooperation opportunities for SGH researchers and careers at EBRD. “EBRD invests in improving living conditions. This mission could not be fulfilled without our staff,” emphasised Director Wilczak. You can join EBRD international team both at the bank London headquarters and in the regional offices where EBRD implements projects.


Then, representatives of the OECD visited SGH. On 5 December 2024, we had the pleasure of hosting Ambassador Ewa Kubel, Deputy Permanent Representative of Poland to the OECD and Martin



Wassermann, Talent Management analyst. The guests presented the internship programmes offered by the OECD addressed to students and graduates. Thanks to the cooperation agreement signed at the end of October 2024 between SGH and OECD, our students will have a better chance of obtaining an internship in this organisation. In January 2025, the CWM organises a meeting dedicated specifically to this programme and announces recruitment for it. The possibility of internships is also offered by the Permanent Representation of the Republic of Poland to the OECD, as Ambassador Kubel said. This type of internship is addressed primarily to people interested in a diplomatic career. The OECD also offers a range of opportunities for experts to collaborate on analyses and conferences, particularly in the areas of health, pensions and taxation.

The next meeting in the series took place on 18 December 2024. This time, we hosted Geoff Gottlieb, Permanent Representative of the IMF for Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe and Maciej Onoszko, responsible for communication in the Warsaw office of the IMF. The career path in this organisation was illustrated by the personal experience of Director Gottlieb, who told the participants of the meeting about what he had done at each level. It met with great interest, especially from the students, who had a lot of questions for the guest. It should be emphasised that the IMF also offers cooperation to scientists in ongoing projects and in the preparation of expert reports.

At the beginning of February, our University was also visited by Fernando Reis, Big Data statistician at Eurostat. Although his visit coincided with the holiday period, Fernando Reis met SGH academic staff dealing with this subject. It should be emphasised that thanks to the cooperation established as part of the project, two SGH staff took part in the conference *New Techniques and Technologies for Statistics* organised on 11-13 March 2025 in Brussels, which is the largest annual event organised by Eurostat.

In May 2025, a contact point will be launched at CWM, where the staff and students will obtain information about the possibilities of scientific and research cooperation and building professional careers in international financial and economic organisations. It will also be a platform enabling representatives of these organisations to establish contact with SGH experts dealing with specific fields of science. The initiative aims to strengthen the recognition of our University in the world as an important scientific and research centre. 



↑ Mariusz Radło, Marek Bryx

A few reflections after visiting the IMF

 **MARIUSZ-JAN RADŁO**

In the first week of February 2025, together with Prof. Marek Bryx, we visited the International Monetary Fund (IMF), where we could participate in important events and a series of meetings with key representatives of this prestigious institution. These talks allowed us to establish new contacts and identify specific areas of potential cooperation between SGH and IMF, including scientific activity and professional development of the university staff and students. The project of further cooperation will be coordinated by the International Centre of the SGH Warsaw School of Economics.

IMF FIRESIDE CHAT

We started our visit by participating in one of the key internal events of this international financial organisation – IMF Fireside Chat. The meeting, chaired by IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva, hosted this year's winner of the Bank of Sweden Prize in Economic Sciences (also referred to as the Nobel Prize in Economics), Professor Simon Johnson. The discussion focused on the impact of modern technologies on economic growth and the importance of inclusive and extractive institutions in the context of sharing the benefits from this growth. During the debate, we highlighted the risks associated with growing U.S. protectionism and drew attention to the need for strategic reorientation of Europe, including the Polish economic policy, as a response to changing global economic conditions.

EXPLORATION OF COOPERATION OPPORTUNITIES


We spent the rest of our visit at numerous working meetings at the IMF, during which we discussed potential areas of cooperation, including research cooperation with IMF economists dealing with Poland, which may lead to joint projects and analyses on the impact of economic policy on investments. At the same time, the IMF expressed its interest in organising specialist seminars for SGH doctoral students, which will facilitate their possible recruitment to the prestigious Economist Programme (EP).

We also considered the possibility of preparing and implementing training for IMF employees conducted by SGH experts. While in the context of institutionalisation of cooperation, there was a proposal to create a database of SGH experts, which would enable more efficient cooperation on projects carried out by the IMF.

During the talks, we paid particular attention to the issue of career development of our students and employees. We have reviewed the IMF recruitment programmes, such as the “Fund Internship Program (FIP) for PhD Students”, the “Research Analyst Program (RAP)” for graduate students, and the “Economist Program (EP) for PhDs”. The Fund also indicated the possibility of employing experienced experts in the fields of economics, finance, IT, law and communication.

An important element of cooperation may also be the joint data analysis as part of the IMF Data Hub initiative, which uses Big Data and administrative microdata for advanced economic analyses. We can jointly identify and analyse data available in Poland, using the resources of the SGH Warsaw School of Economics and national public institutions.

Thanks to the contact with representatives of IMF Publications, we also learned about the possibilities of publication in the prestigious *IMF Economic Review*, which is an attractive publication platform for SGH scientists dealing with global economics and macroeconomic issues.

To sum up, the visit to IMF created a solid foundation for the intensification of cooperation, which the International Centre of the SGH Warsaw School of Economics will develop and coordinate in the near future. We believe that this will bring significant benefits to our University and the Polish economy. 

HABILITATED DOCTOR MARIUSZ-JAN RADŁO, Professor at SGH,
Head of the Global Economic Interdependence Department,
Collegium of World Economy, SGH

SGH representatives visit the World Bank

 ANNA SZELAĞOWSKA, TOMASZ WIŚNIEWSKI

From 2 to 8 February 2025, the SGH Warsaw School of Economics faculty members—Prof. Anna Szelągowska (head of Department of Real Estate Market and Innovative City) and Dr. Tomasz Wiśniewski (head of the European Union Unit)—participated in a study visit to the World Bank headquarters in Washington, D.C. The visit was part of the ongoing “SGH_Expert_Network” project, aimed at strengthening the SGH internationalisation capacity through an expert network.

During the time spent at the World Bank, the SGH representatives held a series of meetings at various levels, gaining practical insights into the structure of the World Bank Group and its key areas of expertise. The primary goal of this first-hand experience was to facilitate collaboration between the SGH researchers, doctoral candidates and students and this prestigious and influential international institution.

RAISING AWARENESS OF THE SGH EXPERT POTENTIAL

As a result of the discussions, the World Bank staff gained a better understanding of the SGH expert potential, recognising its position as a leading economic university in Central and Eastern Europe. Given that the World Bank does not maintain standardised forms of long-term cooperation with academic faculty, the SGH experts interested in collaboration were advised to establish direct professional contacts with relevant **WORLD BANK EMPLOYEES** ([LINK](#)) based on their area of expertise. In some cases, such direct engagements may lead to the participation in World Bank projects.

The experiences of other institutions suggest that creating the SGH expert database, mapping faculty members’ competencies, could improve the efficiency of establishing professional connections between SGH researchers and international institutions. Before initiating direct contacts, it is recommended to review the World Bank’s current project portfolio and publications.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SGH STUDENTS, DOCTORAL STUDENTS AND GRADUATES

Discussions held by Prof. Szelągowska and Dr. Wiśniewski also addressed opportunities for SGH students and doctoral candidates to engage with the World Bank, as well as career prospects for SGH graduates within the institution. In addition to the internship programmes available to students and doctoral candidates that should be promoted at SGH, it was advised to



↑ Defne Gencer, Chandrasekar Govindarajalu, Anna Szelągowska, Tomasz Wiśniewski, Tamara Babayan

promote the Young Professionals Programme (YPP)—the World Bank flagship initiative that offers a five-year employment contract with the possibility of extension. During such a programme, the Young Professionals work at the World Bank headquarters in Washington, D.C. as well as in its regional offices worldwide. The discussions also highlighted the World Bank’s commitment to a non-discriminatory employment policy based on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

ENERGY TRANSITION AND DECARBONISATION AS A CHALLENGE FOR THE MODERN GLOBAL ECONOMY

The SGH representatives also exchanged their research expertise with the Energy Transition and Decarbonisation team (Energy and Extractives Global Practice), focusing on energy transition challenges and related considerations for energy efficiency of enterprises and other agents within the economy as well as buildings. The discussions underscored a unique position of Poland—a country whose economy, due to its level of development, no longer falls within the World Bank’s primary focus and operations, while its ongoing and prospective projects related to energy transition remain a crucial challenge and still require support.

This visit enhanced SGH’s engagement in international co-operation, reinforcing its role as a key partner in shaping economic research and policy in the global arena. 

PROFESSOR ANNA SZELAĞOWSKA, Head of Department of Real Estate Market and Innovative City, Collegium of Business Administration, SGH

DOCTOR TOMASZ WIŚNIEWSKI, Head of European Union Unit, Collegium of World Economy, SGH

CIVICA Student Engagement Fund – summary of the first call

MAŁGORZATA CHROMY, MAŁGORZATA ZNOYKOWICZ-WIERZBICKA



Since October 2022, the SGH Warsaw School of Economics has been carrying out activities as part of CIVICA – The European University of Social Sciences alliance. Most members of the SGH academic community have already learnt about numerous examples of activities undertaken by the alliance in many dimensions of our university performance – from teaching, to research cooperation, integration of library resources, student exchange and finally to sports events. As part of CIVICA, SGH is responsible for building the community and identity of the alliance, primarily among students, but also among other members of the academic community of partner universities (WP 9 – Community and Identity). One of the initiatives implemented in this area is the Student Engagement Fund (SEF), whose activities we would like to present in this article.

The idea behind the creation of SEF was to provide students and young researchers (Early Stage Researchers ESRs) with the opportunity to carry out projects together. Within WP9, funds have been reserved for this type of activity and their distribution is determined by the results of the competition procedure.

The projects submitted under SEF should promote and support European cooperation and intercultural understanding through the involvement of students and ESRs from at least two CIVICA partner universities and fully conform to the local rules and policies regulating students and ESRs-led initiatives at each of the partner universities involved. In addition, they should fall within the four thematic priorities of CIVICA:

1. Societies in transition.
2. Earth crises.
3. Democracy in the 21st century – Europe anew.
4. Data-driven technologies for social sciences or in general EU priorities such as sustainability, multilingualism, diversity and integration,

solidarity, promotion of European culture and cultural interaction.

According to the SEF regulations, student initiatives may include a very wide range of activities carried out with the participation of teams from at least two universities of the alliance – such as competitions, conferences, workshops or hackathons. Such events can be organised both online or in a hybrid mode and with the assumption of exchanges between CIVICA universities. The detailed rules for constructing the SEF project budget (including the categories of acceptable and unacceptable expenditure) and the procedures related to the evaluation of projects and making decisions on their financing are included in the SEF regulations and in the call for proposals.

The first SEF competition was concluded at the end of December 2024. It is now an excellent opportunity to present its results, as well as to summarise and draw the first conclusions from the SEF operation.

The first SEF call for proposals was announced on 1 October 2024. There were 28 applications for co-financing of projects submitted, 21 of which met the formal requirements and were subject to substantive evaluation. The main factor disqualifying the application was, despite the explicit provisions of the SEF regulations, the lack of pre-approvals of partial budgets from all the universities involved.

Project applications meeting the formal requirements were evaluated on the basis of four criteria set out in the SEF regulations:

- quality and added value of the project (0-20 points);
- impact on the student community, also in terms of the number of students that will be involved/reached by the project, as well as the number of CIVICA universities involved in the application (0-10 points);

- thematic relevance of the project – alignment of the initiative with CIVICA thematic areas/EU strategic priorities/thematic areas (0-10 points);
- feasibility of the project and adequacy of the budget (this criterion includes the eligibility of the planned budget and the effectiveness of the expenditure, defined as the consistency of the requested funding with the planned activities and results of the project) (0-10 points).

Despite a high substantive rating of almost all the projects submitted, the SEF Committee was able to award funding to only 13 of them. The limited funds allocated to the first SEF call turned out to be a decisive factor. Aiming at the best possible allocation of limited funds, WP9 coordinators negotiated with project teams in several cases, which, thanks to the reduction in the amount of requested expenditure or the final agreement on the university cost-free participation in certain projects, made it possible to formulate the final list of co-financed projects.

CIVICA students prepared extremely interesting projects, addressing a number of important social problems – from the protection of women's rights, to the issue of international migration, sustainable transformation of cities, challenges related to artificial intelligence to contemporary threats to democracy in Europe.


The vast majority of the submitted projects assumed the implementation of short mobility of students to universities associated in CIVICA, although in many cases the organisation of hybrid or online events was also planned. Smaller-scale projects, i.e. involving students from two or three CIVICA

universities, prevailed among the applications. Moreover, it could be seen that the student communities of each university, to varying degrees, took advantage of the opportunity to make use of the SEF funding for projects. Among the universities involved in the largest number of implemented projects were SGH, LSE, Sciences Po and Hertie School.

Based on the experience of the first call for proposals under SEF, a review of the fund regulations and procedures is currently underway. The next call for projects will be announced in early autumn this year. As part of its promotion, an information campaign is planned to encourage participation in SEF, as well as registration of student organisations in the CIVICA database of university organisations. Student teams from SGH considering the possibility of implementing the project together with colleagues from other CIVICA universities are encouraged to contact the SGH International Centre for full information about the SEF rules.

Let us invite all readers to follow the information about the events organised as part of the SEF projects on an ongoing basis.

The projects qualified for implementation under the first call for proposals under the Student Engagement Fund are shown below.

Activities carried out under CIVICA – The European University of Social Sciences are co-financed by the Erasmus programme⁺. 

MAŁGORZATA CHROMY, Director of SGH International Centre, CIVICA Manager

DOCTOR MAŁGORZATA ZNOYKOWICZ-WIERZBICKA, Deputy Director of SGH International Centre, WP9 Coordinator at CIVICA



Project	Bocconi	CEU	EUI	Hertie	IE	LSE	Sciences Po	SGH	SNSPA	SSE	Leading Institution
SustainabiliCITY: Advocating for public policies for climate-resilient urban transformation						X		X			SGH
CIVICA EU Regulations Game				X		X				X	SSE
Higher Education 2.0: Navigating the Post-GenAI world		X				X					CEU
AI Governance Challenge: A CIVICA Student-Led Initiative				X		X					Hertie
Environmental Justice, Harm and Repair: Reimagining Transitional Justice's Relation to the Environment		X	X			X					CEU
Warsaw Negotiation Round					X			X		X	SGH
HackEd 2025: Hertie x IE				X	X						Hertie
Unveiling the United Nations				X			X				Hertie
Diasporas' Economic Impact on European Societies (DEIES)								X		X	SGH
PGU-Playing for Global Understanding			X					X			SGH
The Democracy Divide: Understanding Europe's Democratic Extremes						X	X				Sciences Po
CIVICA Women's Rights and Femicides Awareness Campaign	X						X				Bocconi
Women's Leadership Conference 2025		X			X		X				IE University



Freedom is the most precious thing

On 15 January 2025, during his visit to Warsaw, **Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky visited the SGH** Warsaw School of Economics, where he met our University students. In 2023, the SGH Senate awarded President Zelensky the title of Doctor Honoris Causa. First, the Rector of SGH Piotr Wachowiak welcomed the distinguished guest on behalf of the entire academic community, then the leader of the Ukrainian state said a few words and answered students' questions.

Piotr Wachowiak

“Dear Mr. President, Dear Ministers, Dear Mr. Ambassador, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to welcome you Mr. President within the walls of our Alma Mater – the oldest and one of the leading economic universities in Poland and Europe. It is also a great honour for the SGH community that you decided to visit our University. We are really grateful for that.

We are deeply impressed by the heroic attitude of the Ukrainian people and you personally, Mr. President. Thank you for fight not only for your own country, but also for our common European values and freedom in Europe and the world. You have proven your attachment to freedom, self-determination and democracy many times so far, beginning with the referendum held on 1 December 1991, in which more than 90% of the participants voted for independence, to the broad social movement triggered by the Orange Revolution, to the revolution that defended Ukraine’s right to choose the European path of development and integration with the EU. However, it was only the annexation of Ukraine’s Crimea, the

occupation of Ukraine’s eastern territories and the armed invasion of Ukraine by Russian forces in February 2022 that made the world realise how fragile the foundations of geopolitical reality are, proving at the same time that democracy, freedom and the rule of law are not given anywhere once and for all and must be fought for every day.

Since the first moments after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, the Warsaw School of Economics has been actively involved in humanitarian aid for people in the hostilities affected areas. We welcomed many people, mainly Ukrainian women and children, under our roof and provided them with accommodation in our student halls of residence. We conducted in-kind donation and fundraising campaigns. We also expanded academic cooperation with our partners in Ukraine, trying to respond immediately to their needs caused by the war. Experts from our university, including students and doctoral students, also made effort to develop a strategy for Ukraine’s recovery. I am proud of these actions and deeply moved by the solidarity response that the difficult situation of Ukrainians aroused in our community.

✦ The meeting with the President of Ukraine attended by crowds of students, lecturers and administrative staff



PHOTO: PIOTR KOTAKOWICZ, SGH

The war in Ukraine affected us directly as a university. On 1 March 2022, Oleksiy Morklianyk, an undergraduate student at the SGH Warsaw School of Economics, died as a result of wounds inflicted in the Kyiv region. The car he was travelling in was hit by some pieces of shrapnel from a Russian missile.

All these circumstances, along with a great admiration of our community for your heroic conduct, Mr. President, towards the Russian aggression caused that my proposal to award you, Mr. President, an honorary doctorate received truly enthusiastic support of the whole SGH community. The resolution of the SGH Senate on awarding the title of doctor honoris causa to President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky was adopted on 24 May 2023. The SGH highest honour was awarded in recognition of his merit for international cooperation and work for freedom and dignity in the world. The commentary on the resolution states that "the President is a new type of international leader – an authentic, charismatic and heroic leader", characterised by "wisdom, courage and responsibility in extreme situations."

The reviewers emphasised that the President is distinguished by his valuable ability to create a positive image of Ukraine in the world. Thanks to his innate predispositions, freedom of public appearances and excellent rapport with audiences, President Zelensky has achieved something hardly ever attainable by professional politicians. He won the hearts of people around the world and convinced them to support Ukraine, which had

PHOTO: PIOTR POTAPOWICZ, SGH (2)



† President of Ukraine and Rector of SGH in Rector's Office

been mercilessly attacked. Mr. President reached a record high media popularity when he rejected American proposals to evacuate from Kyiv, declaring "I don't need a lift, but ammunition".

The reviewers drew attention primarily to the political dimension of Mr. President's accomplishments in domestic as well as international politics. As a management specialist, I cannot help noticing his extraordinary leadership skills. Mr. President is certainly characterised by well-perceived situational leadership – the President is able to see a broad context and long-term consequences – assigning specific tasks to the trusted co-workers.

I am convinced that with the repulsion of Russian aggression by the Ukrainian people, peace and economic prosperity will prevail throughout Ukraine, based on cooperation with European structures, in particular with Poland. I believe that soon this monstrous, unjust war will end with Ukraine's victory and soon Ukraine will join the Western world, although the price it has to pay for this is very high. I want to strongly emphasise that it is our duty to support the efforts of the Ukrainian people at all times. Once again, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for visiting our University. Let me cordially invite you to a calm discussion on the economic recovery of Ukraine and its development after the end of the war.

Long live free and independent Ukraine!"



† Honorary doctorate for Volodymyr Zelensky

Volodymyr Zelensky

“First of all, I would like to say that it is an honour for me to be here today. I would like to thank the SGH Warsaw School of Economics, above all its people. I am an ordinary man, and I would like to thank you, ordinary Polish people, the students who supported ordinary Ukrainians in a very difficult moment through volunteering, help, their attitude and dedication. And for this I want to thank you. It seems to me that humanity is the most important thing, and it is these values that we all fight for. I want to thank you for that.

I am very happy that Ukraine has such a neighbour as Poland. I am very happy that our students, Ukrainian students, have such friends – students from Poland. I think that we have many different challenges ahead, but as Mr. Rector said, recalling the 1990s in Ukraine, and then all the revolutions that took place in our country, this bloody full-scale Russian war against Ukraine, we will definitely get through all this, we will definitely fight for a just peace for Ukraine, for victory, and we will rebuild our country. All this is important to us. I am fully convinced that we will do all this together with our friendly, great and strong neighbours – with you.

Thank you! Glory to Ukraine!”



↑ At the meeting with the President of Ukraine, a question was asked by Eduarda Korniyenko from the Student Association for Ukraine's Recovery

President Volodymyr Zelensky responded the question asked by a student (Eduarda Korniyenko of the Student Association for Ukraine's Recovery at the SGH Warsaw School of Economics and the Yaroslav the Wise National Law University) about the steps to be taken by Ukrainians so as to improve the strained relations with Poles, considering our difficult common history as well as current challenges.

“I think that today, defending, in principle, the whole of Europe, we are taking these very steps. And they are common. Yes, Ukraine is paying the highest price – unfortunately, it is the human casualties. And not because of us, but because of Russia... For the Russians it is a challenge that Ukraine may be independent, that it is independent, but in their opinion we are not independent. That is why Ukraine is fighting for this independence and this is certainly a strong step towards supporting Poland and other neighbours. If Ukraine fails, others will continue to fight and there will be more casualties. And the Russians will go further if we don't stop them. This is a fact. Therefore, the defence of our independence, our freedom is of the utmost importance. Freedom is the most valuable thing, the ability to feel life, and as it turned out due to the war – the most costly, too. And I think that it is in the defence of Ukraine, Poland and Europe that I see the development of our future relations. Because whoever is with you in the hardest time, who has paid the highest price, will be with you in the future. Anyone who has gone through a hard time like this, will stand by you in another period in peacetime. I'm sure of it. We really hope that we will maintain such relations with Poland, and I believe that we should not pay attention to certain political processes. People know everything, people feel everything, and we have to fight for it. For such allies, for such an Alliance.”

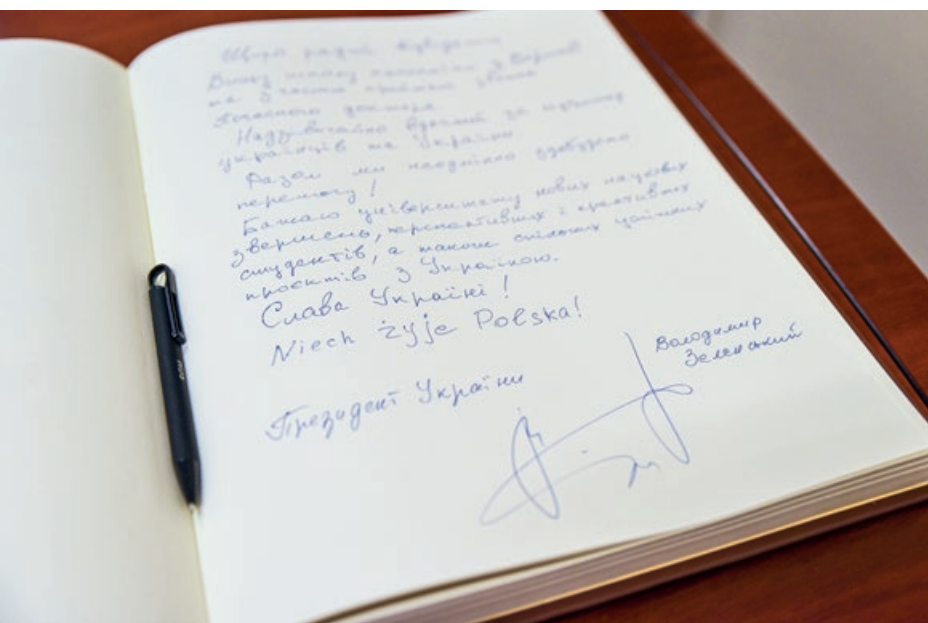


PHOTO: PIOTR POTAPOWICZ, SGH (2)

↑ The President of Ukraine wrote in the commemorative book:

“I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to be a guest at the SGH Warsaw School of Economics and I am honoured to accept the title of doctor honoris causa. I am extremely grateful to you for supporting the Ukrainians and Ukraine. Together, we will certainly win! I wish your University new scientific achievements, creative students and joint success in projects implemented with Ukraine. Glory to Ukraine! Long live Poland!” President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky



PHOTO: PIOTR POTAPOWICZ, SGH

NATO Secretary General at SGH

On 26 March 2025, the University authorities, experts and students met **Mark Rutte**, NATO Secretary General, former Prime Minister of the Netherlands, in 2010–2024, at the SGH Warsaw School of Economics.

The NATO Secretary General first met the Rector-Chancellor authorities. In the office of the Rector of the SGH Warsaw School of Economics, he signed his name in the commemorative book. Among the people welcoming the Secretary General at SGH was also Warsaw Mayor Rafał Trzaskowski, who had a short conversation with him. Then, in the Main Auditorium, the NATO Secretary General gave a speech entitled *Stronger NATO. Commitment to Euro-Atlantic Security* (see the full text of the speech below). After the speech, as part of the Q&A session moderated by Director of the Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM) Dr. Jarosław Cwiek-Karpowicz, Mark Rutte answered questions asked by students and experts. The next item on the agenda was a press briefing for representatives of several editorial offices – Polish and foreign. The event was organised in cooperation with PISM.

Mark Rutte

“Thank you. It’s great to be back in Warsaw. And to see everyone here in the room and following online.

In my first speech as Secretary General in December, I said I wanted to start a conversation with the one billion people living in NATO countries about our security. And what better place to continue that conversation than here in Poland? You are truly a leader on defence, spending 4.7 percent of GDP this year. You are a strong supporter of Ukraine. And Poland has put security at the heart of your EU Presidency.

In my meetings earlier today, I thanked President Duda and Prime Minister Tusk. Not just for talking the talk, but for walking the walk, when it

comes to our security. Now, I want to take some time with all of you. To address some of the questions about the strength of the transatlantic bond. And to sketch out the path to our NATO Summit in The Hague in June, following my recent discussions in Washington with President Trump.

I know that things have been moving fast in recent months. And many of us feel less secure in this rapidly changing world. Russia’s war against Ukraine is raging on. And there are concerns about how it will end. However it ends, Russia will remain the most significant and direct threat to our security. Russia is ramping up its defence spending. And it is rapidly rebuilding its armed forces.

MARK RUTTE took office as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization’s 14th Secretary General on 1 October 2024. As a former Prime Minister of the Netherlands Mr Rutte has a distinguished record of domestic and international achievements including security, defence, employment and social affairs, and economics. He is a strong supporter of global and transatlantic cooperation.

He joined NATO following a distinguished domestic and international career. Mr Rutte served as Prime Minister of the Netherlands for almost 14 years from October 2010 to July 2024. During this time, he presided over four coalition governments, proving his ability to forge consensus without compromising on his values.

Mr Rutte is the longest-serving Dutch Prime Minister to date. During his tenure, he steered the Netherlands through times of significant national and global upheaval, including the economic crisis, the coronavirus pandemic, and the war in Ukraine. He is a committed European and transatlanticist and was instrumental in bolstering his country’s role at the heart of NATO and the European Union.

The downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 (MH17) by Russian-backed forces over Eastern Ukraine in 2014 marked a turning point in Mr Rutte’s premiership. It cemented his belief that no country can respond to today’s interconnected security threats alone: we are stronger together. He was a member of the Dutch parliament from January to May 2003 and leader of the liberal Dutch People’s Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD) from 2006 to 2023. He led his party to election victory in 2010, becoming the first liberal Prime Minister to be appointed in the Netherlands in 92 years.

Mr Rutte started his professional career in the private sector in 1992, working in human resources management for Unilever and its subsidiaries. He studied Dutch history at Leiden University and has been a guest teacher at the Johan de Witt group of schools in The Hague since 2008.

Source: NATO





† Jarosław Cwiek-Karpowicz, Mark Rutte, Piotr Wachowiak head from the Rector's Office to the Main Auditorium for the NATO Secretary General's meeting with the SGH community

Built on Chinese technology. Backed by deadly Iranian drones. And North Korean troops and missiles. Putin has not given up his ambition to reshape the global security order. And he is not alone. China, Russia, Iran and North Korea are increasing their military cooperation and exercises. Beijing is carrying out its own massive military build-up. Including its nuclear forces, with no limits or transparency.

What's happening in Europe matters for the Indo-Pacific. Securing lasting peace for Ukraine is essential for European security. And for global stability. The world is watching. I welcome that President Trump has broken the deadlock with Russia. And that talks are ongoing towards a ceasefire.

I also welcome that the UK and France are leading efforts to contribute a lasting peace, which we will discuss in Paris tomorrow (March 27). At the same time, I know there are questions about the strength of the transatlantic bond. And the United States' commitment to European security.

There is tough rhetoric. There are difficult debates between Europe and America over trade and tariffs. And there are calls to revive ideas of European autonomy. Let me be absolutely clear, this is not the time to go it alone. Not for Europe or North America. The global security challenges are too great for any of us to face on our own.

When it comes to keeping Europe and North America safe, there is no alternative to NATO. Without the US, UK, Canada, Norway, Iceland, and Türkiye, it is impossible to imagine the defence of Europe. And nothing can replace America's nuclear umbrella, the ultimate guarantor of our security. A strong transatlantic Alliance remains the bedrock of our defence. And stronger European Allies are a unique strategic asset, which allows the US to promote peace through strength on the global stage. When it comes to security and defence, I am

absolutely confident that the United States remains committed to NATO and to Article 5.

Don't just take my word for it. Listen to President Trump who has repeatedly stated his commitment to a strong NATO. Listen to the strong bipartisan support in the US Congress. And listen to the American people, three-quarters of whom support NATO according to a recent poll. I heard this again myself in meetings in the White House and on Capitol Hill two weeks ago. And it's not only about words, but also about actions. US troops lead our NATO forces here in Poland. American strategic bombers patrol European skies. And US aircraft carriers send a message of strength at sea.

Yes, Europe needs to know that Uncle Sam still has our back. But America also needs to know that its NATO Allies will step up. Without restrictions and without capability gaps. It's only fair. Reassurance is a two-way street. The US commitment to NATO comes with a clear expectation. That European Allies and Canada take more responsibility for our shared security.

So, at our Summit in The Hague, we will begin a new chapter for our transatlantic Alliance. Where we build a stronger, fairer and more lethal NATO. To face a more dangerous world. A stronger NATO means investing and producing even more for our defence. A fairer NATO means all Allies doing their fair share. And a more lethal NATO means that, whilst we will always remain a defensive Alliance, we will always be ready and able to do what it takes to stay safe. When it comes to spending more, European Allies and Canada have stepped up with huge new investments. Last year alone, they increased defence spending by 20 percent. And over the last decade, they added an extra 700 billion for defence.

Almost all Allies are now spending two percent of GDP on defence. And many have pledged to go even further and faster. Poland is leading the way, alongside Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, moving to five percent in the coming years. The German parliament has unlocked more than a trillion in extra defence and infrastructure spending. Czechia, Denmark, France, Norway, and the UK, have committed to considerably ramp up spending. And the European Union only last week came out with an initiative to free up to 800 billion for defence. All of this is nothing short of a sea-change for NATO's collective defence.

When it comes to producing more, there are also good examples. Europe and North America are now producing millions of rounds of 155-millimetre shells. New gunpowder and TNT factories are being built across the Alliance, from France to Finland. And there are more fifth generation fighters flying in the Alliance skies than ever before. We are also producing more together. Take the F-35, which combines American ingenuity with British knowhow, Italian finesse and Dutch technical expertise.

European companies are supporting ammunition production, from Texas to Florida. And the US and Europe are building a new Patriot missile factory in Bavaria, in Germany. This is the kind of industrial win-win we need more of, not less of. This is how we rebuild our industry, together. And this is how we create good jobs and growth, on both sides of the Atlantic. There are so many opportunities to boost our transatlantic defence industry even more. There are hundreds of billions of extra euros and dollars to go around.

Finally, European Allies and Canada are also doing more for our shared security through NATO. They lead seven of our eight multinational deployments on our eastern flank. An Italian Commander leads NATO's peace-keeping mission in Kosovo. A Dutch Commander leads our training and advisory mission in Iraq. And European Allies lead on NATO air policing over Iceland, the Western Balkans, and the Baltics.

When undersea infrastructure in the Baltic Sea was threatened this winter, European Allies stood up in record time through NATO's Baltic Sentry. Without the need for a single US ship. European Allies and Canada are also playing a bigger role in Ukraine, as President Trump rightly asked them to. Last year, they provided 60 percent of NATO's military aid to Ukraine. NATO's command in Germany is now coordinating security assistance and training for Ukraine. With logistics hubs, including here in Poland. And Poland also hosts NATO's Joint Analysis Training and Education Centre. A joint initiative with Ukraine to

capture important lessons and innovations from this terrible war.

Over the last decade, NATO has carried out a generational transformation of our Alliance. We have significantly increased our presence on our eastern flank. Invested in new capabilities and military infrastructure. And revitalised our defence industry. Backed by large-scale exercises to demonstrate our commitment to each other's defence. At our Summit in The Hague, we will do even more to ensure all Allies do their fair share. Based on ambitious new targets for all NATO Allies. Strengthening our capabilities, readiness and deterrence. Including air and missile defence, long-range missiles, and more ground forces. This will enable Europeans to take on a greater share of our collective defence, while maintaining strong American commitment and presence in Europe.

So we know what we need to do to stay safe today. And strong tomorrow. We know exactly what forces, resources, and capabilities every Ally needs to provide. And we have the plans and procedures in place to defend our own nations and support Ukraine. NATO Allies represent half of the world's economic and military might. Two continents, 32 nations, and one billion people.

Together in NATO, Europe and North America are unbeatable. Today and in the future. So, to our one billion people I say this. Be assured. The transatlantic bond is strong. And, yes, we will make NATO a stronger, fairer, and more lethal Alliance. That is how we all stay safe in a more dangerous world. So, thank you and I look forward to our discussion." 🇺🇸

PHOTO: PIOTR POTAPOWICZ, SGH (3)



✦ The NATO Secretary General was warmly greeted by SGH students, who took selfies with him. Some of the audience watched the meeting on the screen in the Main Hall, as the Main Auditorium had already run out of seats



PHOTO: KNEU

+ Piotr Wachowiak and
Dmytro Lukianenko

Piotr Wachowiak, Rector of SGH receives the title of Doctor Honoris Causa awarded by KNEU

 KAROLINA CYGONEK

The SGH Rector received a DHC “in recognition of the unprecedented support for KNEU students, lecturers and administrative staff during the ongoing war in Ukraine as well as of intellectual leadership, unwavering commitment to the ideals and values of international university cooperation, European solidarity and support for dynamic academic mobility through joint programmes and scientific initiatives, also in recognition of his personal courage”.

Piotr Wachowiak was awarded an honorary doctorate of the Kyiv National Economic University (KNEU) under Protocol No. 6 of the Scientific Council (equivalent to Senate) of this university of 27 February 2025. The document was signed by Dmytro Lukianenko, the Rector and Professor of KNEU and Doctor Oleg Pacenko, the Secretary of the Scientific Council.

“In times of war, universities become not only centres of scientific research and knowledge creation but first of all they determine the moral, spiritual and intellectual system of values for the society, which always develops the steadfastness of the nation. The SGH Warsaw School of Economics, with its Rector Professor Piotr Wachowiak, is a leader not only in providing ongoing assistance to Ukraine but also in shaping the strategy of post-war development and recovery of its economy,” emphasised Rector Dmytro Lukianenko.

“I am extremely grateful and moved to have received this distinction. I accept it with great joy. It reflects the SGH community involvement in helping Ukraine and its citizens. Let me strongly emphasise that I accept this honorary doctorate of the Kyiv National Economic University not only as an expression of appreciation for me but for our entire Alma Mater. I would like to thank the Rector and the Scientific Council of KNEU for this distinction. From now on, I will be a frequent guest here, because I have become a member of the community of this University. I am very proud of this,” said Rector Piotr Wachowiak.

The Rector of SGH was greeted with thunderous applause from the numerous KNEU academic community, including students, lecturers, academic authorities as well as representatives of the state authorities of Ukraine.

The celebration began with a minute of silence for the victims who died recently in Sumy and Kryvyi Rih. Then, the Ukrainian and Polish national anthems were played.

“Today’s celebration is not only a formality but a profound symbol of gratitude, solidarity and academic fraternity. On behalf of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, I would like to sincerely thank Professor Piotr Wachowiak, the Rector of the SGH Warsaw School of Economics, for his sincere support for Ukrainian universities, lecturers and students in such a hard time for Ukraine. At the moment, there are three Polish universities which show the greatest initiative in this area. These are: the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, the University of Warsaw and the SGH Warsaw School of Economics. We are extremely grateful. Our friendship is not only at the university and academic level, but also at the level of ministries,” said Mykhailo Vynnytskyi, Deputy Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine, responsible for higher education.

He thanked his Polish counterpart Andrzej Szeptycki for his friendship and support for Ukraine in the field of higher education.

“Today, two anthems symbolically sounded in this auditorium. It is a deep testimony of our friendship and gratitude. Gratitude for the fact that in such a hard time of our history, Poland, our Polish friends give us a helping hand. This is not only help but also an act of professional and human solidarity. It is an example of how universities perform as active participants in the process of building a European society. (...) We are creating a new history, a leadership that does not end with words but manifests itself in concrete actions. And Professor Piotr Wachowiak has become the leader of the European community when it comes to support for Ukraine,” emphasised Deputy Minister Wynnycki.

He noted that thanks to the cooperation of both universities, the ties between our countries are being strengthened. “That is why today’s event is held to pay respect not to only one person. It is to confirm that education, partnership and mutual support are of strategic importance for our common European future. Dear Rector, your presence here in Kyiv is a gesture which has a very deep meaning. This is support not only for our university, but for our entire academic community in Ukraine,” the Deputy Minister emphasised.

The Vice Rector for Scientific and Pedagogical Work and International Relations, Professor Wiktor Chuzhikov, presented the profile and main achievements of Rector Piotr Wachowiak. He emphasised the fact that the Rector and the delegation decided to visit Ukraine in this – as he put it – “difficult and dangerous period of active hostilities on the part of the Russian aggressors”. Vice Rector Chuzhikov also extended thanks and congratulations to Rector’s wife, Katarzyna Wachowiak, a senior lecturer at the SGH Centre for Physical Education and Sport.

During the DHC ceremony, the Rector of the SGH Warsaw School of Economics – the oldest and one of the leading economic universities in Poland – and also the director of the Institute of Management gave a lecture entitled *A Leader for Difficult Times*.

“Today, a company is operating in the conditions of complexity and uncertainty, which is caused by a turbulent environment in which changes occur very rapidly and are difficult to predict. In order for it to grow and succeed, it must meet these changes, using them as an opportunity rather than a threat. (...) However, these changes must be well considered, otherwise there is a risk of plunging into chaos. A leader must also be able to anticipate

them in order to change even faster than the environment, which is not an easy task.

The success of a company depends to a considerable extent on the competence and commitment of its staff, but they are not able to contribute to it by themselves. They need a leader who awakens their passions and inspires them to take the desired action from the point of view of the company. He should be a creator who, with his enthusiasm and willingness to act, will engage his co-workers in the implementation of common goals. Therefore, the leader should influence them in such a way that they gather around him and achieve success together,” emphasised Piotr Wachowiak.

He presented the most important qualities that a leader operating in a turbulent environment should have, and said how to effectively influence co-workers and become successful together with them. These include credibility, high emotional intelligence as well as trust in the relationship between the leader and co-workers.

At the end of the ceremony, the Rector of SGH made a gift to the Rector of KNEU, an art print by Tytus Brzozowski showing the characteristic buildings of Warsaw and Kyiv, which merge into one whole. Kyiv and Warsaw were connected by a bridge. “May the bridges we can see in Brzozowski’s print permanently and forever connect our nations!” – said Rector Wachowiak.

An activity of planting trees in the avenue in front of the main building of the university is an element of the ceremony of awarding DHC by KNEU. The Rector of SGH planted a maple tree – a tree very resistant to temperature changes, withstanding other harsh weather conditions, which refers to the difficult geopolitical conditions in the world. The symbolism is even deeper – the tree was planted during the approaching spring and Easter – the time of renewal.

In 2017, SGH and KNEU signed a Memorandum of Understanding and Agreement on Student Exchange. Since then, academic exchange between universities has been developing intensively. In total, there were 23 participants in the Erasmus+ exchange programmes in 2017-2024. KNEU is a partner in the CIVICA for Ukraine Project. SGH cooperated intensively with KNEU professors in connection with the establishment and operation of the Ukrainian Scientific Diaspora in Poland and research on the situation of scientists in exile. KNEU is the only university of economics where students also learn Polish and there is a department of Polish studies there.

On 8 October 2024, the Rectors of SGH and KNEU signed a Letter of Intent on partnership with regard to the establishment of double degree programmes. The partnership provides for concrete actions to establish double degree programmes with KNEU at bachelor’s and master’s levels. The first steps to this end have already been taken. For SGH, this will be the first double degree programme with a Ukrainian university.

As both Rectors preside over the conferences of rectors of the capital cities of Ukraine and Poland, the cooperation between SGH and KNEU has enormous potential for the development of Polish Ukrainian relations at the level of the Conference of Rectors of Warsaw Universities and the Council of Rectors of Kyiv and Kyiv Oblast Universities. Kyiv-Warsaw – a common cause also for the academy. 🇺🇦

PEOPLE AND EVENTS



Modern green zone on the SGH campus



KAROLINA CYGONEK

At the beginning of the 2024/2025 academic year, our university commissioned a new building at Batorego Street. **The Innovative Space Centre (CPI) includes 24 classrooms for nearly 1000 students, coworking spaces, offices of departments, think-tanks and business units of the SGH Warsaw School of Economics. We are talking about the effects of this investment to Dr. Marcin Dąbrowski, the Chancellor of SGH.**

★ The building's façade is all glass, providing natural interior lighting. The building is covered with as much as 1,900 square meters of green space - grasses, shrubs and other plants planted on the roof and in pots on the façade around each floor.

What are your first impressions on entering the new building, Mr. Chancellor?

First of all, I am aware of the great work done in recent years by the SGH team together with our cooperators – the general contractor, Erbud and its subcontractors: the contract engineer, Sweco and the team of the architectural office of Professor Bolesław Stelmach. This is the largest investment made by SGH in the last 18 years. In 2006, for the 100th anniversary of the university, we completed a multifunctional building C for students and employees, and now, in October 2024, an extremely modern building at Batorego Street.

Having entered the building, we can see a modern space, serving cooperation in many available coworking zones, academic education in beautiful, well-equipped and acoustically comfortable classrooms and scientific and operational work in modern offices. The interiors are dominated by natural materials – concrete with various textures and wood in the form of industrial parquets, acoustic wall and ceiling cladding sound dispersing elements and furniture made of natural plywood. The glazing is encased in profiles made of anodised aluminum (the coating created during the anodising process is characterised by greater strength and corrosion resistance – ed.) and natural varnished steel.

The first steps from the entrance to the building take us to the public foyer, which is also the central communication and exhibition space. The eye is drawn to beautiful wooden stairs leading to the teaching floors and to two green walls – 7.5 m wide and 18 m high each, covered with diverse vegetation. They are unique, they climb from the underground teaching floor up to the glazed roof. They provide oxygen, have a positive effect on acoustics and air humidity in the coworking and communication spaces.

It is this ubiquitous greenery, not only inside the building, that says a lot about the School's approach to ecology, also in the case of construction investments. What about ecology in this building?

The new building was designed and built with ecology and sustainability in mind. Let's start with what we can see. On a plot of 2500m², a building with an internal area of 9000m² was built, covered with as much as 1900m² of external green area – grass, ground cover plants, creeping plants and shrubs planted on the roof and rows of pots on the façade around each floor. In this way, the building fits perfectly into the surrounding zone of Pole Mokotowskie Park but also has a suitable energy balance – plants on the facades reduce the energy demand for cooling systems. The facades are glazed, thanks to which the interiors have natural lighting. At the same time, the high standard of workmanship reduces heat loss and excessive heat

gain. The heated and cooled interiors are mechanically ventilated, and the air handling units are equipped with energy recovery systems. It is also possible to adjust the intensity and colour of artificial light to external conditions.

It is also worth noting that the infrastructure of the building is adapted to the needs of people commuting to SGH by bike. In the car park hall, there are 60 two-level stands and a modern changing room with showers.

Such an investment is a huge project posing many challenges. What was the most difficult moment during its implementation?

With such a complex, three-year project, you may come across a lot of different unexpected moments... But seriously, in this case, there were mainly positive moments. It was really satisfying to reach each subsequent stage of this investment. From the groundbreaking and the construction of diaphragm walls to the open shell state and then the closed shell state to the installation of services and finishing works.

Certainly, the unexpected surge in prices on the construction market, especially after the outbreak of war just across our eastern border, was a difficult stage. It was necessary to amend the contract value and do a lot of hard work by both sides: the general contractor and us. At one table, we conducted many months of negotiations which required the preparation of extensive documentation and at the other table, we continued to manage the work on an ongoing basis so that there were no downtimes in the investment.

Every week, there were coordination meetings on the construction site, and every day smaller meetings were conducted by the Investment Office. We also had internal meetings as part of the supervisory team every week. In addition, our efforts were constantly supported by the contract engineer, Sweco and the office of architect Prof. Bolesław Stelmach. The general contractor, Erbud delegated probably the best employees of the company to this project. It was a really committed and professional team on the part of the site management, as well as the office and executive staff. We could count on them all the time, i.e. for 36 months of this construction, and I would like to thank them very much for that.

We are at a business university, so it is hardly possible not to ask about the financial side of this investment. What was the total cost and how much funding did the SGH authorities manage to obtain from the state budget?

Such a large, modern and multifunctional building is associated with an investment that required an appropriate SGH financial strategy from the School. The necessary expenditures amounted to PLN 156.7 million, plus the financial costs of servicing the loan. However, it is worth emphasising that we have the best credit conditions possible to achieve on the market. The university took out a loan of PLN 70 million for a period of 20 years, so that its handling would be felt as little as possible for the conducted business. We have managed to enlist cooperation with the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB) based in Paris – it is a financial institution established by the Council of Europe to pursue social goals through loans granted on preferential terms. Despite the fact that it is an international financial organisation, the loan was taken out in PLN, which protects the

university from exchange rate risks. It is secured by a guarantee from the State Treasury, which we obtained from the Ministry of Finance. Currently, we are the only university in Poland with this form of investment financing.

At the same time, it should be emphasised that thanks to the efforts made together with Rector Piotr Wachowiak, we managed to obtain substantial funding for this investment from the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. The Ministry, noticing the professional management of this investment and the needs of the university, systematically revised the level of financial involvement, the total value of which amounted to an impressive PLN 70.4 million. This is a record high support that our university has ever received from the Ministry, many times higher than the one received in the past. The remaining funds needed to “clinch” the investment came from own funds. Such a financial structure made it possible to maintain a good cash flow of the university, and thus to proceed to another large investment, which is the modernisation of historic building A.

The building quickly became part of the activities of our university, it has been teeming with life since the very beginning. How badly did the SGH academic community need it?

Indeed, with the new academic year, we moved all planned classes from building A to the new building. Institutes, departments and offices of business units previously located in building A have also found their new place at Batorego Street (building A has been closed for the duration of a comprehensive modernisation, planned for at least the next two academic years). In addition, the new building has managed to find space for SGH think tanks, previously working without any office space, such as AI Lab or SGH Think Tank for Health Care. On the office floors, new seats were gained by business units which had previously had tough working conditions, such as the Publishing House, the Project Support Office or the Investment Office. On the ground floor, there is a separate area, the so-called Dean's Office space, prepared for the time of the necessary modernisation of the Main Building, which we plan to do after the modernisation of building A. For this transitional period, there will be some additional conference space here.

The new building additionally provides some exhibition space, also important in the activities of our university. The foyer and co-working spaces located on the teaching floors have already proven themselves as a place for the organisation of SGH Adaptation Days, stands promoting the brands of business partner companies, exhibitions promoting medical prevention or the works of artists. We are planning further exhibitions and events. We are also looking forward to the spring and summer period, which will allow us to take full advantage of the green and beautiful wide-open roof of the new building. 📍

Thank you for your time and the interview.

KAROLINA CYGONEK, Editor-in-Chief of SGH Magazine



PHOTO: PRIVATE ARCHIVE

Synthesis of culture and nature

 BOLESŁAW STELMACH

Architecture is the art of space transformation, so when designing the SGH Innovation Space Centre, we were seeking for the architectural structure beauty. **The spaces of this building constitute an internal continuum – a multifunctional multi-level hall housing a multi-faceted functional core of the building.** Its structural sides include MEP services shafts, and conceptually, it is an opening to light and greenery. They are connected by a characteristic element – a green wall of living plants – which symbolically leads us to the roof.

The architecture of the Stelmach & Partners Architects is to be only the simplest and most contemporary, minimal “box” for activities and a programme enriching the local community. The architecture which makes a new contribution to its surroundings and the social environment in which it is created seems to enjoy a much better understanding today than it did two decades ago. After winning the architectural competition of the Association of Polish Architects in 2017, our Architectural Office Stelmach and Partners signed a contract with the SGH Warsaw School of Economics for the creation of construction and executive design projects which would allow for the selection of the contractor in a tender, in accordance with the Public Procurement Law.

CONCEPT

The winning concept assumed that the building located at Batorego Street, next to the central SGH campus, in its programme and spatial shape, would be a synthesis of culture and nature (as Romano Guardini wants it in his *Letters from Lake Como*). The spatial context of this facility is the nearby Pole Mokotowskie – the most extensive city park in the centre of Warsaw and the SGH campus, with legendary student club “Stodoła” located on the adjacent plot. This context has fundamentally affected the way of thinking about this place and, as a result, the shape of the structure and its relationship with the external space. The teaching building of



PHOTO: PIOTR POTAPOWICZ, SGH

↑ A green wall of living plants symbolically leads us to the roof

the Centre for Innovative Space (CPI) differs from similar university facilities erected so far. A commendable, unsurpassed exception is the Library of the University of Warsaw (BUW) in Powiśle authored by Prof. Marek Budzyński.

In the programme of competition work, we proposed that the CPI building should be a combination of teaching and coworking spaces but also including recreational spaces. The structure of the building was conceived and designed in such a way that the teaching and scientific areas intermingle with recreational spaces (restaurant, café) and coworking spaces. These, in turn, will become – due to the gardens next to the side of “Stodoła” and along Batorego Street – part of the city public spaces intended for students and researchers. It is an important element of raising the rank of the capital, increasing the attractiveness of its space, and consequently a significant impulse for the development of the city, especially its academic dimension. These areas open in terms of programme and space are located on the entire ground floor. This concept, unique on the Polish scale and found in the West, was accepted by the SGH authorities, as the Rector and Chancellor in particular had seen models for this building in Milan and Singapore.

In the programme discussions between the architects and the investor, there were specific solutions that should be included in the Centre for Innovative Space. Simply put, we thought that the new building should be a combination of teaching space, restaurants, cafes and exhibition and coworking spaces.

We must also not forget that architecture is the art of space transformation, so we were seeking for beauty, which for us is the beauty of the structure of the building. The spaces of the building constitute an internal continuum – a multi-level, multi-faceted functional core of the building, containing MEP shafts. They are connected by a characteristic element – a green wall of living plants – which symbolically leads us to the roof. The roof was designed as an endemic meadow that would have been overgrown with windblown seeds if we had not built this house in this place. It is, of course, dedicated to students. A meadow of perennials and grasses on the roof is a “green” lecture hall, where you may not only relax in the open air during breaks between classes, but also conduct teaching classes. It can obviously be associated with the green roof, walls and interiors of BUW. These elements of meadows also appear on the perimeter of all facades, visible from the lecture interiors and study

rooms. In turn, the brick red colour and slants of the facade appear as a reminiscence of the forms of other SGH buildings, the author of which is Jan Koszczyz Witkiewicz.

Of course, such a multifunctional and multi-layered, demanding structure needed extremely sophisticated and extensive installations, especially environmentally friendly, including low-voltage ones. All appliances, including air handling units, heat pumps, etc. of the designed MEP systems were placed under this roof, on the technical floor.

TO BE BEAUTIFUL... A HOUSE MUST MOVE AWAY FROM ITS FUNCTION

The construction of such a complex and services-saturated house in the centre of Warsaw is always a big challenge for architects, contractors and investors. In addition, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the outbreak of war in Ukraine, and consequently, unpredictable determinants of the construction market in 2021-2022, it was obviously difficult for the contractor, but also for the investor, to assess the final budget and schedule of the investment, which, after all, affects the budget. The major problem on this construction site was to find alternative solutions to the designed ones, which were either no longer achievable because production was discontinued, or the waiting period made their use unrealistic. If not for the attitude and competence of the SGH Chancellor and Investment Office, it would be practically impossible to find such solutions. The contractor conducted continuous negotiations with the investor, which was reflected in the procedures for selecting subcontractors and suppliers of elements. The executive designs accepted by the investor had to be truly interchangeable, in accordance with the Public Procurement Law, so they had to be modified so as to fit into the budget and deadlines of the investment, without deteriorating the quality of the house space or its functionality. And this, as we know, requires additional time and energy (competence and patience) from the investor, contractor and architect. Against this unusual background, the investor fulfilled this difficult role with exceptional competence and commitment.

Building a house that is to meet all applicable regulations, investor requirements, and at the same time which would be a work of architectural art, is almost impossible in Poland. As Tadao Ando used to say, a house must move away from its function as far as possible in order to become a work of art. In a university building (applicable to all universities), which is represented in the construction process by a dozen or so people (supervision inspectors, inspectors checking designers, architects, advisors to directors and managers), such a move is simply impossible. The elements of space creation included in the competition concept had to change in the direction of their literal utilitarianism and compliance with the regulations in force in Poland (every place in the landscape is magical, every construction site is trivial – as Louis Barragan is said to have described it). Each inspector tries to protect their employer from potential threats, which means that the most unlikely black scenarios of use are indicated. An example to be quoted is the replacement of the Geze “Stelmach” door handle, made according to an individual design by Bolesław Stelmach, with a typical one, because “if the user grips it incorrectly, he can rub his fingers against the frame”. Although the handle and frames corresponded to the applicable regulations, and you can hurt your fingers in a hundred other places built, of course, in accordance with the regulations. One can imagine the effect of such


a legal principle of avoiding any risk of using historic buildings. However, it was important that the SGH Chancellor and Investment Office, directly involved in the construction, always tried and always found a good solution through negotiations.

SEEKING A COMPROMISE

The aesthetics to which the Stelmach & Partners Architects is faithful is the truth of structure and materials; noble proportions and textures. The house must be built with the simplest, reusable materials: concrete, steel, wood and glass. Equally important as this post-industrial aesthetics is our belief that architecture is to be experienced. Therefore, it was very important to choose and accept the textures of architectural concrete. Since level –1 houses lecture halls, student common spaces and co-working spaces, they required access to daylight. All this through gaps around the perimeter of the building, so that the glass ceiling lets in sunlight along the diaphragm wall. Thus, the diaphragm wall, with a hand-treated surface giving it the texture of “rock”, became the inner wall of the lecture halls. The contractor presented several variations of this texture, and the architect, with the participation of the investor, indicated which of the mock-ups (on a 1:1 scale – ed.) best suited them. Of course, it was necessary to look for a compromise between the sensorily and expressively strongest texture and utility considerations. The choice of architectural concrete textures that we designed in the common areas of students on the upper floors was similar.

Structural facades, designed from coloured architectural concrete, were also subject to similar architectural concrete acceptance procedures. The edges of the protruding green terraces overgrown with meadows, which run around the entire building, and the dynamic slanted beams, were coloured in brick red in accordance with the design. The colour of this house was to symbolically connect the new building with the entire historical complex of SGH buildings, whose facade colour is a recognisable sign in the landscape of Warsaw.

The subcontractor of the general contractor – Warbud Beton – knew our high requirements in this matter, because he was a supplier of prefabricated elements for the building of the Parliamentary Committees in Warsaw. He fulfilled his duties excellently, both in the Sejm building and as part of the SGH investment. After a dozen or so tests on the mock-ups brought to the construction site, workshop details of cornices and sweeps on the facades were determined. The biggest difficulty for the contractor was the architect’s requirement that the prefabricated elements should not have triangular corners, i.e. they should have corners at right angles and a texture as close as possible to poured form-work concrete. We wanted to avoid the quite often observed effect of “plastic” prefabricated elements, devoid of weight, materiality, and thus expression and experience of the built matter.

The next stage of these efforts and the architect’s work with the contractors was the selection of a mass coloured concrete mix, so that it resembled as much as possible the colours of other SGH premises designed by the pre-war master – Jan Koszczyz Witkiewicz and impregnations that would not spoil the final effect. This also applied to the impregnation of the facing surfaces of architectural concrete elements. 

There is some space in the space for everybody

SGH in the Academic Space Network A Pole to fly into space soon

 ELŻBIETA MARCISZEWSKA, MACIEJ MYŚLIWIEC



Space and its exploration is an area for the activity of specialists and researchers from many sectors of the economy and fields of knowledge. There is also some place there for economists, specialists in management, finance, international cooperation and law. They can play a great role in sustainable space exploration, commercialisation of innovative technologies and their application to improve the quality of life on Earth. It is worth realising how great challenges we face so that science, research and international cooperation could contribute to the dynamic, ethical and effective conquest of space and business development in the space industry. We must try to understand the importance of the space sector for the development of our civilisation.

In May 2021, on the initiative of the AGH University of Science and Technology in Krakow, the concept was presented behind the establishment of the Academic Space Network (ASK). The primary goal of this initiative is to foster cooperation and to exchange experience in the field of education and research related to space technologies between Polish universities and the commercialisation of the results of this research. The motto which guides the operation of the network *Space for the Earth and humanity* indicates the usefulness of space exploration. The dynamic development of the space sector poses a number of new challenges to academic centres, but also opportunities for their participation in this sector. The SGH Warsaw School of Economics has been a member of the Academic Space Network since 2022 and participates in the work of the ASK Council. The network currently brings together 23 academic and research centres. Most of them are technical universities, polytechnics, classical universities such as the Jagiellonian University, but also those specialising in economic, agricultural, medical

or natural sciences. The collaborative efforts made by ASK, in accordance with its statutory objectives, are aimed at the development of Polish science in the field of broadly understood space research, training staff for this sector, commercialisation of research and its innovative solutions. The work of the ASK Council is attended by Prof. Elżbieta Marciszewska – Rector's Representative for ASK, who initiates and coordinates the SGH activity in the space sector within the Network, including the series entitled *Talks about Space*, workshops for students, meetings with interesting people within the sector, strengthening cooperation with POLSA, with which a partnership agreement was signed in June 2024. In the area of teaching, SGH also offers postgraduate studies in Space Management in the New Economy.

The Academic Space Network has contributed to the preparation and promotion of the space flight of the second Pole. At the Council meetings, we hosted Dr. Sławosz Uznański-Wiśniewski, who is scheduled to fly to the International Space Station (ISS) in mid-2025 as part of the IGNIS project.

During the meetings of the ASK Council, we learnt about the experiments proposed by academic centres to be performed on the ISS by the Polish astronaut.

Poles in Space is the title of a series of *Talks about Space*, held at the SGH Warsaw School of Economics, which referred to another space mission participated by Dr. Sławosz Uznański-Wiśniewski. We talked about the management challenges of the new mission participated by the Pole, about the experiments that our astronaut will perform and how this mission will show the Polish space potential.

One month before the flight of the second Pole into Space, a seminar entitled "Is There Money on the Moon? The Emerging Lunar Economy" had place in SGH with special guest David H. Lehman, former head of NASA Space Programmes, technical director for the development of information management subsystems on Mars (Deep Space One Mission) and many other missions, including the MARS ODYSSEY Mission and NASA's Mars and Moon exploration projects.

In the spring of 2025, nearly 47 years after General Mirosław Hermaszewski's flight, Poland



PHOTO: AXIOM SPACE

will once again send one of its citizens into space. This event is of great importance not only for Polish science and technology but also as an inspiration for future generations of students, researchers and scientists. Sławosz Uznański-Wiśniewski, an ESA project astronaut, will take part in the Axiom-4 mission. His stay on the International Space Station (ISS) will last two weeks and will provide an opportunity to conduct a series of scientific and technological experiments.

The mission, named IGNIS, is the result of an agreement signed in August 2023 between the Ministry of Development and Technology and the European Space Agency (ESA), concerning the preparation and execution of a Polish technological and scientific mission on the ISS. The Polish Space Agency (POLSA) has been closely involved in the preparations for the mission.

This mission represents a major opportunity and challenge for the Polish space sector, with many individuals from Polish and international institutions already engaged in its implementation.

SŁAWOSZ UZNAŃSKI-WIŚNIEWSKI'S PATH TO ESA

Sławosz Uznański-Wiśniewski was born on 12 April 1984, in Łódź—on the anniversary of Yuri Gagarin's historic spaceflight and the maiden launch of the Space Shuttle Columbia. Growing up during a period of rapid advancements in space and computer technologies profoundly influenced his interests and career path. His fascination with science and technology, fueled by the achievements of space programmes, led him toward engineering and physics. Interestingly, space has always played a role in his life due to his unique birth date. He recalls receiving birthday greetings that often included "Happy Cosmonautics Day!"

✦ Ax-4 crew: Tibor Kapu, Peggy Whitson, Sławosz Uznański-Wiśniewski, Shubhanshu Shukla

Uznański-Wiśniewski's career began in engineering and high-energy physics. After completing his studies at the Łódź University of Technology, he continued his education in France, earning a doctoral degree in electronics. His specialisation in radiation-hardened systems is now crucial for space missions, including future Mars exploration. This expertise opened doors to work at the world's most prestigious scientific institutions. He joined CERN, where he was responsible for the infrastructure of the Large Hadron Collider (LHC). His work at CERN did not only deepen his technical expertise but also enhanced his ability to operate in an international environment and handle some of the most advanced technologies in the world.

In 2022, Uznański-Wiśniewski applied to ESA's astronaut selection programme, competing against over 22,500 candidates. The selection process was extremely demanding and multi-stage, involving psychological, medical and physical tests. After months of rigorous evaluations, he was chosen for ESA's Astronaut Reserve, a personal achievement and a source of pride for the Polish space sector.

Poland's decision to increase its contribution to ESA enabled the country to send an astronaut to orbit, leading to Uznański-Wiśniewski's assignment to Axiom-4, a commercial mission to the International Space Station. He is currently undergoing intensive training in the United States, preparing for the challenges of living and working in space. This programme includes not only technical and scientific aspects but also physical and psychological preparation for the extreme conditions of spaceflight.

POLISH EXPERIMENTS ON THE ISS

During the IGNIS mission, Sławosz Uznański-Wiśniewski will conduct 13 advanced scientific and technological experiments aboard the ISS. These studies span various fields, from biotechnology to artificial intelligence, with the potential for groundbreaking discoveries. The experiments were selected from proposals submitted by Polish research institutions, universities, and space-sector companies. Their diversity demonstrates the broad competencies of Polish organisations in space research.

The studies will include the impact of prolonged space travel on human mental health, the operation of advanced AI-driven data processing units in microgravity and the potential use of microalgae in future space missions and space medicine.

It is worth briefly describing all 13 experiments, keeping in mind that, in addition to these, Uznański-Wiśniewski will also conduct educational experiments and live connections with Earth, ensuring a demanding schedule throughout the mission.



✦ Elżbieta Marciszewska and Sławosław Uznański-Wiśniewski during ESA DAYS, 4 June 2024

The Astro Mental Health experiment, developed by the University of Silesia, will examine the psychological impact of prolonged space travel on astronauts, analysing self-reported data, audio diaries, and facial expressions to understand how humans cope with extreme conditions. Meanwhile, Immune Multiomics, conducted by the Military University of Technology (WAT), will focus on the human immune system, investigating gene and protein expression changes in blood cells under microgravity to assess how extended missions affect the body's ability to combat infections.

The mission will also test autonomous artificial intelligence systems in space in the Leopard ISS experiment, utilising the Leopard Data Processing Unit, an AI-driven processing unit developed by the KP Labs. Additionally, Wireless Acoustics, led by Svantek, will investigate the ISS noise levels and their impact on astronaut health using a network of wireless acoustic sensors, which could improve future space habitats.

Further studies will explore the effects of microgravity on genetically modified yeast enriched with tardigrade proteins in the Yeast TardigradeGene experiment, developed by the University of Szczecin, to assess their potential use as biofactories for space missions, Mars, and the Moon. Another study, Human Gut Microbiota, from the Military University of Technology (WAT), will examine changes in the gut microbiome of astronauts, helping to develop optimised diets for long-duration spaceflight and ensuring astronaut health and performance during and after the mission.

Another critical area of research will be the stability of polymer-based drug delivery systems in space, addressed in the Leo-DDS experiment, designed by the Centre of Polymer and

Carbon Materials of the Polish Academy of Sciences (CMPW PAN). This research will help develop better storage and administration strategies for pharmaceuticals in long-duration space missions. Studies will also investigate the survival and adaptation of volcanic microalgae in space in the Space Volcanic Algae project, developed by Extremo Technologies, assessing their potential for closed biosphere systems, oxygen production, and medical applications in space missions.

PhotonGrav, developed by Cortivision, will test brain-computer interface technologies based on near-infrared spectroscopy (fNIRS), exploring new communication and medical diagnostic methods for astronauts. Complementary to this, EEG Neurofeedback, from the Academy of Physical Education and Sport in Gdańsk (AWFiS), will assess stress reduction techniques in space, measuring brain activity and psychological responses during prolonged ISS stays.

Structural and radiation-related studies will also be a part of the mission. RadMon-on-ISS, developed by SigmaLabs, will test scalable radiation sensors in orbit, providing data to improve astronaut safety and shielding technologies. Mollis Textus – Astro Performance, a project from Smart Diagnostics, will use artificial intelligence to analyze soft tissue changes in astronauts under microgravity and improve diagnostic methods for long-term space missions. Finally, the MXene in LEO experiment, prepared by AGH University of Science and Technology, will analyze the stability of advanced MXene nanomaterials in low Earth orbit and explore their potential applications in wearable health-monitoring devices and telemedicine for astronauts.

BENEFITS FOR THE POLISH SPACE SECTOR

The IGNIS mission has already created major opportunities for the Polish research and technology development. The participation in ISS-based studies allows Polish scientists to gain flight heritage, enabling them to test new technologies in microgravity. This could lead to innovations in medicine, engineering, and space technologies.

The mission also holds great educational and inspirational value. A significant increase in interest is expected in space-related academic programmes, such as aerospace engineering, astrophysics, robotics, and materials science, but also in fields such as psychology and logistics. Universities across Poland will likely see a surge in student enrolment in these disciplines, strengthening the Polish space sector over the long term.

Moreover, this mission could spark a new era for Polish space science and industry. Increased investment in space research and technology development is anticipated, along with the emergence of new startups and companies specialising in satellite technology, space robotics and navigation systems. These developments could create new high-tech jobs and solidify Poland's position as a key player in the European and global space sector. 🇵🇱

PROFESSOR ELŻBIETA MARCISZEWSKA, Rector's Representative for the Academic Space Network, SGH

MACIEJ MYŚLIWIEC, founder of the Space Agency

Force of impact exerted by SGH expertise at economic congresses

 **KAROLINA CYGONEK**

For several years, the SGH Warsaw School of Economics has been the main content partner of the Economic Forum in Karpacz – the largest and most important event for representatives of the economic elites of the Central and Eastern Europe region. The involvement in the organisation and course of the Economic Forum is important for SGH for substantive, prestigious as well as promotional and media reasons.

Since 2018, an inseparable element of the Forum to inaugurate this prestigious event, attracting several thousand participants, has been the presentation of the Report of SGH and the Economic Forum prepared by several dozen SGH experts. The report provides insight into what is happening in the Central European economy. If someone wants to take the pulse of Central Europe, they must first read this report. This year will see the eighth edition of the Report. The publication – which is a comprehensive summary of the most important economic and social processes occurring in Poland and in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe – contains chapters written by SGH experts, eminent in many areas of economic life, and one chapter is prepared by analysts of the European Investment Bank.

Since 2019, the SGH Economic Award has also been granted during the Forum. It is a distinction for people who have made special accomplishments in the field of entrepreneurship and innovation, contributing to the economic development of Poland.

SGH is also a content partner of three other important congresses annually held in Poland: the International Economic Congress Impact in Poznań, the European Forum for New Ideas (EFNI) in Sopot and the Open Eyes Economy Summit (OEES) in Krakow. It is also an institutional partner of the European Economic Congress (ECE) in Katowice. The formula of these congresses assumes



PHOTO: PIOTR POTAPONICZ, SGH

the panel participation of numerous SGH scientists and experts in various fields, as well as the SGH rector and chancellor authorities. SGH cooperates with the leading Polish media in media coverage of these events. The reports can also be found on the pages of the SGH Magazine, in social media and on the SGH YouTube channel. 

↑ SGH at the *Economic Forum in Karpacz 2024*, presentation of the Report of SGH Warsaw School of Economics and the Economic Forum 2024

KAROLINA CYGONEK, Editor-in-Chief of SGH Magazine

The first laureate of the SGH Economic Award was the president of LUX MED Group, Dr. **Anna Rulkiewicz**. She was granted the award for activities that made LUX MED Group the leader of the Polish private healthcare industry. In 2020, the Award was given to president of PKO Bank Polski **Zbigniew Jagiełło**, for enhancing the position of the PKO Business Group as a leader of the financial market in the Central and Eastern Europe. The 2021 SGH Economic Award went to **Krzysztof Pawiński**, co-founder, co-owner, and currently also the president of the Management Board of Maspex Group, one of the biggest food producers in Central and Eastern Europe. In 2022, the winner of the SGH Economic Award was Dr. **Irena Eris**, the founder and owner of firm Dr Irena Eris. For almost four decades Dr. Eris has been among the top Polish business leaders, successfully expanding her skincare cosmetics firm, renowned for their high quality in Poland and abroad. In 2023, the SGH Economic Award was given to **Czesław Lang**, world championship medalist, vice-champion at the Moscow Olympics (1980) in road bicycle racing, entrepreneur, organiser of Tour de Pologne. And in 2024, the winner was Professor **Henryk Skarżyński**, famous otolaryngologist, audiologist and phoniatriest, the founder and director of the Institute of Physiology and Pathology of Hearing and the World Hearing Centre at Kajetany. The interview with the Professor on the next page.



The measure of my success is a recovered patient



KAROLINA CYGONEK

The extract of the interview with the winner of the SGH Economic Award 2024, **Professor Henryk Skarżyński**

Professor, please forgive me, but your accomplishment and achievements in otolaryngology, audiology, phoniatrics and paediatric otolaryngology on a global scale are so great that they are intimidating. But let's make last things go first. What else needs to be done in these areas? What is that keeps you awake at night?

It is certainly gratifying that we have already managed to do so much. However, there are still many challenges ahead of us. About 1.5 billion

people in the world have various types of hearing impairment that affect their daily performance, especially communication with the environment. In addition, life expectancy is increasing and societies are ageing, especially in the West, and more and more people are having problems with partial hearing losses. This is a great challenge for doctors and healthcare systems. It is an impulse to search for and implement new methods of treatment – the development of new surgical solutions, gene therapies and new technologies, thanks to which it will be possible to effectively counteract deafness and

communication exclusion. As a physician, clinician, scientist and also a founding member of the World Hearing Forum at the WHO, I try to be strongly involved in everything that can be described today as “communication health”, which has a decisive impact on the development of modern societies around the world. Regardless of this, I am close to the patients on a daily basis and do my best when treating them. I am glad that for over 20 years we have been performing the largest number of hearing-improving surgeries in the world. I myself have already performed over 240 thousand such surgical procedures.

Let me come back to it later. And now *ab ovo*. Why did you choose this area of medicine? What fascinates you so much about human hearing, voice or speech?

I got into medicine thanks to a family open to challenges. About halfway through high school, following the example of my elder sister, I decided to study medicine, although from the first forms of primary school I was fascinated with history, especially the tragic history of the First Polish Republic. When I found myself at the Faculty of Medicine of the Medical University of Warsaw, I quickly decided that I would choose a specialisation related to manual activities.

In the first year of my studies, I was very good at dissecting. Then we dissected muscles, vessels, nerves and I noticed that I would probably want to go in the surgical direction, where my manual dexterity would count. I already had some experience – for years I liked DIY or drawing and I developing my imagination. I chose microsurgery and practiced threading a thread through the smallest needle eye I could find for half an hour every day, but with my hands outstretched and dipped in a large cup. The microsurgeon must be able to suspend the hand at the right moment, for example, to stop over a small element in the ear, control the slightest movement and its force. And maybe this finally led me to the choice of specialisation. If such a passion, then my specialisation should be surgery or microsurgery. And I decided very early that I would use the skills of a microsurgeon to treat hearing impairments, when I was entrusted with the reorganisation of the ossicular bank used for transplants. But the greatest fascination with otosurgery began in 1988, when at a congress in Paris I saw the first effects of deafness treatment. This determined the launch of a new programme in Poland and performance of the first surgeries in 1992. Thanks to this, I was able to “become independent”, to be a precursor in the field of procedures that had not yet been performed in the country at that time and whose introduction in many Western countries was in its initial stage. More importantly, I observed that the problem of hearing impairment is becoming disease of civilisation at an alarmingly fast pace.

“*In the past, hearing loss of a seventy-year-old was considered normal. Today, noise, in-ear headphones, loud music from early childhood make this 70-year-old age limit goes down by even 20 years and **the problem affects younger and younger people**, and one in three primary school students already suffers from transient tinnitus.*”

A disease of civilisation? Is this fact in the public consciousness?

In the past, hearing loss of a seventy-year-old was considered normal. Today, noise, in-ear headphones, loud music from early childhood make this 70-year-old age limit goes down by even 20 years and the problem affects younger and younger people, and one in three primary school students already suffers from transient tinnitus. On the one hand, we have a great need to treat more and more patients with hearing impairments, and on the other hand, we have an incredible progress in medicine. Today – as Poland – we have our own school of otosurgery and an undeniable contribution to the development of world medicine.

In 2003, the first part of the World Hearing Centre was opened, which – as a team – we financed in about 80%. The second part of the Centre was established in 2012 – we financed it in about 50%. This is how the first such facility on the map of world medicine was created, in many respects. This shows our determination and organisational skills.

You have practically implemented almost all implantable systems to improve hearing in Poland. You were also a pioneer of these solutions in Europe and around the world. The surgical method, considered to be your specialisation, the so-called Skarżyński method, has been implemented in dozens of centres around the world. Could you explain to our readers in an accessible way what this method is and what was so innovative about it that other specialists around the world drew on it and used it?

I presented a programme of treatment of partial deafness, i.e. a hearing condition in which the patient has some remnants of hearing and is not completely deaf, for the first time in the world at an international conference in New York in 1997. It was a great challenge at the time to operate on someone who is not completely deaf, although

the residual hearing can only give a sense of sound and no understanding of speech. At that time, my concept expanded surgical indications not for thousands of patients, but for millions. I presented the first results of my treatment at continental congresses in 2000. In 2002, I performed the world's first cochlear implant surgery on an adult who could hear low sounds well, which allowed her to understand speech in 7-10%. In 2004, I performed such a procedure for the first time in the world on a child. This was a great achievement, a milestone, because at that time cochlear implants were only implanted in cases of very profound hearing impairment and total deafness.

We talked about this method and the Polish school of otosurgery during one of the debates of the 2nd Congress "Science for Society", which took place at the Warsaw University of Technology and at the World Hearing Centre in Kajetany on 9-10 June in 2024. I encourage you to watch the video available on the nauka-dla-spoleczenstwa.pl website. In a nutshell, it can be said that surgical treatment of congenital or acquired hearing impairments with the use of cochlear implants and appropriate electrodes according to the "Skarżyński's six steps" procedure allow to preserve the intact structure of the inner ear and the existing residual hearing or socially efficient hearing only at low frequencies. It was indeed a breakthrough in science and world medicine. In order to popularise it, I launched the world's first educational programme, under which over 80 otosurgical sessions have already been held at the World Hearing Centre and I have performed over 1600 demonstration surgeries during conferences, symposia and congresses on four continents.

What is the measure of success from your perspective?

Invariably, for years – the sight of patients recovering to their health and hearing capacity. It is really a great satisfaction to observe how successive generations of patients return to their families, social or professional activities, and various deafness treatment programmes initiated by me at the Institute will enable them not only to study or work but also give them a chance to professionally deal with music. I have patients who sing, compose, play instruments, and even record albums and give concerts. It is with the most talented patients in mind that for ten years we have been organising the International Music Festival for Children, Youth and Adults with Hearing Disorders *Beats of Cochlea*. We want to show the world that thanks to the achievements of modern science and medicine, hearing problems are not an obstacle to professional music or the development of vocal talent. An extremely colorful and unique example of this is the world's first musical with the participation of patients and users of auditory implants *Broken Silence*, for which I wrote the libretto. Its premiere took place at the Warsaw Chamber Opera in September 2019. The performance tells the stories of real patients who were born deaf, profoundly hard of hearing or those who lost their hearing later in life, but thanks to the progress in modern otosurgery, they can pursue their musical passions. The composer of the music of *Broken Silence* is an outstanding composer and arranger, phenomenal violinist and bandleader, for decades inscribed in the elite of the Polish music scene, Professor Krzesimir Dębski, and the director is

Michał Znaniecki, associated with the Warsaw Chamber Opera and other institutions on five continents. In the musical, apart from professional artists, there were artists-patients, my wards. All of them are the best ambassadors of what has been achieved in the treatment of hearing disorders. Some of them spoke with me in the European Parliament at the special plenary session on science in 2018, and a larger group – also in front of members of the European Parliament and the European Commission – in 2019 during the European Research and Innovation Days. We showed then how EU funds invested in science change the lives of entire societies.

The measure of my success is, above all, a recovered patient. What we have published is also a measure. I am the author and co-author of many scientific reports. The measure is also the international arrangements adopted on our initiative, e.g. the EU Council Conclusion on the early detection and treatment of hearing, vision and speech disorders in children, including the use of e-health tools and innovative solutions. It was a key event concluding the activities carried out during the Polish Presidency of the Council of the EU in 2011, in the field of equal opportunities for children with communication disorders, which is an integral part of the priority in the area of public health.

The number of rights granted to organise seven world congresses, two continental and over 150 other international conferences and symposia is also a measure. The measure is also the unique structure of the World Hearing Centre's facilities – the first solutions in the country and in the world, e.g. in the field of telemedicine.

You are also the author and co-author of nearly 5000 different scholarly publications, over 4000 presentations at congresses and conventions, 66 scientific and popular science monographs. You conduct extensive teaching activities for students and doctors from Poland and abroad. You have conducted demonstration surgeries for over 8000 thousand professors, heads of departments and other specialists organised in Kajetany and Warsaw, as well as in several countries in Asia, South America and Europe. In total, you have already performed over 240 thousand surgeries! You are active in numerous organisations, and you are the head of congresses. With such an intense professional life, do you find time during the day for other aspects of life? What does it occupy you, what makes you relax, what gives you pleasure?

I have never worked "from – to", but always as long as it was necessary. Work is my passion, in which I often spend whole days. When I find time to regenerate and rest, I always something active like playing football. I also ski and every year I try to spend at least a few days with my loved ones in the mountains. Until recently, I played tennis, but I had to responsibly give it up, because it was too much of a burden for the hand, and it must be fit and perfect during surgeries. I also have a few other ways to relieve and regenerate.

Communing with nature and animals gives me a lot of energy. This is a very good, even life-giving energy. I do recommend it. There are many animals and birds in the vicinity of the World Hearing Centre. I am more and more passionate about my bee apiary. Observing the life of a bee family is like observing society. It is fascinating and motivates us to take more and



PHOTO: IPPS ARCHIVE

more care of our health and the condition of the environment around us.

When I'm tired, I can fall asleep very quickly and in virtually any conditions. Such a dozen or so minutes of switching off during the day regenerates my strength. I also like reading, preferably books on history. History was my first passion, and I almost chose to study history rather than medicine. I'm constantly writing something – mainly for the desk drawer or occasionally for my loved ones. Despite this, more film scripts are being written and preparations are underway for the production of another musical. This time, we want to show the achievements of Polish otosurgery in the context of the history of Ludwig van Beethoven's struggle with deafness.

You are also a laureate of numerous highest state decorations, awards and distinctions. It is really impossible to list them all. How do you perceive the SGH Economic Award?

I am very pleasantly surprised by it. This is an extremely important distinction for me, but also a commitment to continue working for the good of my patients, as well as for the development of medicine and healthcare system in Poland. I accept it as a distinction for the entire team which I have led for over 30 years.

In a sense, I accept it on behalf of a part of the community of people who, through their actions, are changing the organisation of the entire healthcare system in Poland. I am very impressed by the level of the Executive Master of Business Administration postgraduate studies in healthcare carried out by the

“ On the one hand, we have a great need to treat more and more patients with hearing impairments, and on the other hand, we have an incredible progress in medicine. *Today – as Poland – we have our own school of otosurgery and an undeniable contribution to the development of world medicine.*

SGH Warsaw School of Economics and the Medical University of Warsaw, participated by other specialists. I had a great pleasure of giving lectures to extremely demanding participants of this programme. It was a very interesting challenge as I belong to the generation which remembers that the former SGPiS was graduated by the intellectual cream of the best students. And it is still so. Therefore, I treat the recognition of my and my team's activities by the community, the university authorities and personally by Rector Professor Piotr Wachowiak, as something extraordinary and motivating. Thank you all.

Thank you very much for your time and the exciting interview. 📺

KAROLINA CYGONEK, Editor-in-Chief of SGH Magazine

We hardly talk to each other

 PIOTR WACHOWIAK

I admit that organising student debates once a month in the Parachute Hall to be broadcast by the Polish Television was my idea. I am very grateful to Mr. Tomasz Sygut, the General Director of Polish Television for trusting me and deciding to organise these debates within the walls of the SGH Warsaw School of Economics. The assumption was to show the public that students know how to debate, that they can discuss in a substantive way on important and often difficult topics. It was also about showing to young people that even a difficult topic can be discussed in a rational way and without attacking each other. We may have different views and it is really good that we are different, but we should be able to convey these views, show our arguments and understand the arguments put forward by others. Thanks to this, such a debate makes sense and becomes substantive.

The topics that TVP chooses in close consultation with students are often to “stir up a hornet’s nest”. That’s what they are for. Firstly, we try to explore important topics for discussion, but above all, those issues that interest the young generation, today’s students, such as housing, consumerism, why Poles don’t want to have children, defence, refugees and migration. These aspects of life are important from the point of view of the economy and society.


Let me tell you that we, as a society, definitely talk too little to each other. We focus too little on factual arguments. We also don’t know how to listen to each other. What’s more, we can’t discuss anything with each other.

Why is that? I think that the approach should be changed from the earliest stages of education. There is too little debate in primary and secondary schools and it results from our education system. In Western European countries, not to mention the United States, children start holding discussions in their early school years. They prepare presentations, learn public speaking, rhetoric, logic and the art of negotiation.



We therefore need to change the education system. Knowledge is of course very important, but soft skills such as communication are also important.

Students from other universities have also been involved in the SGH debates. We did not want only SGH students to participate in them. We were in favour of diversity, which I strongly as the debate is fuller then and it shows different points of view. After all, each university deals with something different, educates in their own areas. Students of these universities have different horizons and views. We look some issues from different perspectives and it is fascinating. The debates are attended by representatives of Warsaw universities which are members of the Conference of Rectors of Warsaw Universities and economic universities associated in the Conference of Rectors of Economic universities.

The debates are scheduled until May 2025. I think that the cooperation with TVP is so good that in October we will submit new proposals. 

✦ Students during the debate “Housing – a right or a commodity?”, 24 November 2024

HABILITATED DOCTOR PIOTR WACHOWIAK, Rector and Professor at SGH



PHOTO: PIOTR POTANOWICZ, SGH

How to look at debates?



 JAKUB KOZIKOWSKI

As students of the SGH Warsaw School of Economics, when talking about the innate laws that control people, we try to discover their impact on the development of economy. Profit optimisation, a sense of greater harm from the loss of goods than joy from gaining goods of the same value – these are examples of the impact of something primal, something contained in our genetic code. Going further, it should be stated that man is an informational being living in society, and disclosing and obtaining information is the centre around which his daily life revolves. And this is the same fact as the previously mentioned economic principles.

The word trust is positively associated with political stability and interpersonal or business relations. In short, trust is perceived in today's society as something desirable, something that allows us to develop. If we combine the desire to optimise usability with the need to provide information, we will come to the conclusion that, in principle, sharing information with each other is a way to a more prosperous society than a community based on conveying falsehood and mutual suspicion. Therefore, it is worth conducting a dialogue or discussion based on the principle of mutual trust.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TALKING


Declaring our preferences is the key to how properly satisfy our own needs. Where the freedom of speech does not exist and is limited not only by law but also institutionally (property or cultural exclusion from discussion), it is not possible to make such a declaration. The selection of authorities in a democratic society over the

centuries has indicated the dominant representation of people above the average life expectancy in a population, which makes it easy to understand why these people have the greatest amount of knowledge and experience. However, it also gives rise to some difficulties – the knowledge accumulated throughout life may have an increasing gap with age in relation to younger cohorts. As a result, there is lower awareness of the preferences of previous generations and thus suboptimal management policy. What is the conclusion? Well, that the ruling environment should open up to the voices of the young generation which should not be afraid to declare their preferences loudly.

Students from all over Poland were given the opportunity to express their opinion on topics that bother them thanks to the programme broadcast on TV called *Poland, what next?* There are opinions that such discussions do not affect politicians, but in my opinion this is a wrong approach. Edward L. Bernays in his book *Propaganda* argues that the change in human perception is a continuous process in which a one-off event is a brick in the building being erected. The debates in which we take part are just such small bricks that enable us to talk about the needs of young people and share them with the society. Even such small steps are an optimal action, because they inform the incumbents about the problems they are not familiar with.

ADVANTAGES OF DISCUSSION

In the programme *Poland, what next?*, the selected topics concern young people and their problems. Housing, demography, security – these were the leading areas in recent episodes. I am very happy that the authors of the programme talk to us and consider our proposals, thanks to which the conversations are about what is really important to us and they don't confine themselves to "catchy media" topics. Many of us learn to appear in front of the camera and to quickly formulate thoughts, which will have a positive impact on our position in the labour market.

The framework connecting all the topics may be a statement that if an individual is not interested in public affairs, they are certainly interested in him and there is no escape from it. Many students can take advantage of the rare opportunity to express themselves and talk about their needs. Without talking about them, both they themselves and the society will lose, which, due to the lack of knowledge, does not address the problems of its representatives. 

JAKUB KOZIKOWSKI, SGH Geopolitics Ideas & Strategy Society

Families and Generations Lab

 **AGNIESZKA CHŁOŃ-DOMIŃCZAK, MONIKA MYNARSKA**



The newly established Families and Generations Lab is the second SGH entity, following the AI Lab, aimed at integrating research activities, crucial for SGH. The task of the Lab is to animate the scientific activity of SGH staff conducting research on family and generational transformations and their impact on the formation of human capital, in particular in cooperation within the framework of European research infrastructures: SHARE-ERIC (Survey of Health, Ageing, and Retirement in Europe) and GGP (Generations and Gender Programme). SGH is the Polish partner of both these infrastructures, responsible for the implementation of the Polish component of these international programmes.

In 2020, SHARE and GGP under the joint aegis of the Polish infrastructure of Research on Families, Generations and Human Capital were included in the Polish Map of Research Infrastructure, along with only five other infrastructures in the social sciences and humanities. This indicates the undeniable importance of research carried out under these SHARE and GGP infrastructures for the development of research in Poland. The lab activities are also in line with the priority directions of research within the SGH scientific policy, namely the study of demographic changes, social transformations, health, inequalities and regional development disparities.

RESEARCH TOPICS

The observed global trends, including primarily demographic changes and population ageing, changes in the labour market, technological changes or climate change, are an important context for public policies, and consequently also for building knowledge to enable evidence-based planning.

According to the Eurostat demographic projection [EUROPOP, 2022], in 25 years (from 2025 to 2050), the number of working age population (20–64 years of age) in Poland will decrease from 23.05 million to 18.42 million, and the number of people aged 65 or more will increase from 7.43 million to 10.08 million. In this group, there will also be an increase in the number of the oldest people, over 80 years of age, from 1.62 million to 3.12 million. The number and structure of people in the oldest working age groups (50–64) will also change. Processes related to delayed family formation and parenthood, as well as persistently very low fertility rates, which contribute to changes in the structure of the population, also remain a constant subject of social discourse and interest in public policies. Since 2000, the median age of a woman at the birth of her first child has increased from 23.7 to 28 years, and the total fertility rate has invariably remained below the threshold of very low fertility rate of –1.5, preventing a simple replacement of generations (Demographic Yearbook of the Central Statistical Office, 2024). Therefore, it is important to understand the social changes related to each generation, in the context of the performance of individual people and their families.

The main task of the Lab is to conduct comprehensive, methodically advanced, innovative research on demographic and social changes. This task is carried out in close cooperation, not limited to it though, with the aforementioned international social research infrastructures SHARE and GGP. In 2025, SGH signed a letter of intent with the third social research infrastructure currently being created: GUIDE (Growing Up in Digital Europe), whose ambition is to conduct pan-European research on children and young people.

The research within SHARE, GGP and GUIDE enables the observation of changes occurring among three generations as well as scrutinising on the entire course of life. GUIDE will focus on the early development of the individual, collecting data on childhood and adolescence experiences. GGP focuses on the life course of adults, especially on the dynamics of family formation, development and breakdown. SHARE deals with health, professional activity, conditions and quality of life of people in late adulthood and senior phase of life.



RZECZYPOBRAZKOWE

A common feature of these studies is their panel nature, which allows for the study of changes occurring over time. They are affected by broadly understood social and economic processes taking place in Poland, Europe and the world. These studies provide internationally comparable data, which particularly support monitoring and planning of public policies, including primarily health, education, labour market and family policies. These studies account for the life course perspective and allow for the assessment of how various types of activities, especially social investments, affect building of human capital and situations of individuals, families or generations in the long term.

SURVEY ON HEALTH, AGEING AND RETIREMENT (SHARE)

The SHARE survey has been carried out in Poland since 2006 and includes about 6000 respondents. There are subsequent rounds of the survey held every two years – currently the 10th round of the survey is being conducted. The SHARE survey takes place in the form of a face-to-face interview – the interviewers conduct interviews at the respondents' homes. It allows for objective measurements such as handshake strength, with the use of appropriate instruments. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it was impossible to conduct face-to-face interviews, but in 2020 and 2021, two rounds of SHARE Corona telephone surveys were conducted among panel respondents, which allowed them to collect information on how the pandemic affected the situation of survey respondents – their health, the way they work, social relationships as well as other aspects.

What are the conclusions of the SHARE survey? Based on the results of the 8th round of the survey, conducted in 2020 before the pandemic, we can see that the 50+ generation in Poland is changing (Abramowska-Kmon et al., 2023). First of all, especially among 50 and 60-year-olds, the number of people with higher education is growing, and the economic activity in this group is also on the rise. In general, their health is improving, although the growing percentage of obese people or smokers is a cause for concern. However, prolonged professional activity of people aged 50+, necessary to maintain economic and social potential, requires, above all, activities that create conditions for further work and combining professional work with care, especially for older family members. The work environment should be adapted to the diverse needs and capabilities of the 50+ generation. It is necessary to look for solutions to reduce the performance of strenuous physical work, introduce flexible working conditions, as well as promote and develop work organisation practices that improve job satisfaction of people aged 50+. It is also important to develop competences as part of lifelong learning and increase the participation of people aged 50+ in various forms of learning so that they could acquire new competences, for example digital. The development of technology, including the increasingly widespread

use of artificial intelligence, requires the development of these skills. Another area which requires action is health. During the pandemic, there was an accumulation of health debt, which needs to be “repaid” in the form of increased access to tests and health examination. Activities in the area of prevention and public health are particularly important; they prevent the development of a significant part of chronic diseases faced by people aged 50+. Due to the growing number of the elderly, often requiring long-term care, an increase in demand for such services should be expected. Job creation in the care sector can support the activation of people and thus better use of the dwindling labour force.

SHARE research is currently underway in 28 European countries and in Israel.

GENERATIONS AND FAMILIES SURVEY (GGP)

The Generations and Families survey is a short cyclical panel, the full round of which includes three (in the minimal version – two) waves of survey carried out every three years. As part of the first round, two waves of survey were carried out in Poland in the years 2010–2015. The first wave covered almost 20,000 people aged 18–79 and provided detailed information on family biographies, procreative decisions and transformations of family life in Poland.

The results of these studies revealed significant changes in the life course of Poles (Kotowska et al. 2015). Younger generations left their family homes later and later, took up work and set up families. Women’s decisions to give birth to their first child at a later age were associated with a longer period of education and changes in the labour market. Partner models also evolved – more and more people decided to cohabit before marriage. These studies confirmed that the role of women and men in the family and in the labour market was changing. However, it was still women who had more responsibility for household chores and childcare, despite their growing professional involvement. As a result, women face difficulties in reconciling work and family life. These results highlighted the need to adapt family policies and the labour market to the changing realities of family life – but they need to be updated.

The preparatory work is currently underway to launch the second round of the Generations and Families survey, which will be performed on a sample of 10,000 people aged 18–59. Lowering the upper age limit is possible thanks to closer cooperation between GGP and SHARE and the complementarity of their research. The survey will be carried out with a mixed method: online and (like SHARE) in the form of a face-to-face interview. In addition to the topics analysed in 2010–2015, the second round questionnaire will also cover new topics such as flexible and remote working

solutions, the experience of migration and uncertainty about the future (also in the context of pandemics or war).

The second round of the GGP programme is being carried out in 19 European countries as well as in Uruguay, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

GROWING UP IN DIGITAL EUROPE (GUIDE)

The ambition of the emerging international GUIDE infrastructure is to establish a pan-European longitudinal cohort study, providing data on psychosocial, educational, health development and equal opportunities and quality of life of children and adolescents, accounting for the challenges and opportunities associated with modern technologies. Pilot studies are currently underway in seven European countries (e.g. Croatia, Finland, France and Italy). The actual research is scheduled to begin in 2027, when children born in 2019 and their parents will be included in the study for the first time. Two years later, it is planned to launch observation of the second cohort of children, born in 2029. Both birth cohorts are to be followed up to the age of 24.

Due to the sample included in the study and its subject matter, the study “Growing up in Digital Europe” is planned and implemented in cooperation with psychologists. In Poland, the Families and Generations Lab will cooperate in this area with developmental psychologists from the Institute of Psychology of the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw.

MAIN RESEARCH PROJECTS

Thanks to the participation in European research infrastructures, we build the potential and scientific achievements of SGH. We have been able to participate in the implementation of a number of European and national grants. These include projects

- **Non-intended health, economic and social effects of the COVID-19 epidemic control decisions: Lessons from SHARE (SHARE-COVID19)**, implemented in 2020–2024, within which research was conducted on the broadly understood effects of the pandemic on the 50+ generation, including the economic situation, professional activity, health and intergenerational relations. As part of the project, a monograph was written, co-edited by Doctor Anita Abramowska-Kmon and Habilitated Doctor Agnieszka Chłoń-Domińczak.
- **The Generations and Gender Programme Preparatory Phase Project (GGP-5D)**, implemented in 2022–2026 aimed at transforming the GGP consortium into the European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC). Within this project, Polish researchers can co-create the methodological assumptions of international research and expand their knowledge of the operation of international research infrastructures.

- **The Future of European Social Citizenship (EUSOCIALCIT)**, implemented in 2020–2024, which used SHARE data to study types of family and professional pathways in countries with different social investment models and their impact on the socioeconomic situation of people in the oldest age groups.
- **Towards a Resilient Future of Europe (Fu-tuRes)**, implemented in 2023–2026, under which SHARE and GGP data are used to analyse generational resilience. Using the GGP data, we conducted analyses of the resilience of families in terms of their procreative decisions using GGP data, but also assessed how the resilience of older people can be understood, accounting for their economic situation, health and social relationships.
- Since 2025, we have been involved in **the Social Aspects of the Green Transition (SoGreen)** project, which will include pilot research as part of GGP, SHARE, as well as preparation for the implementation of the GUIDE study on the consequences of climate change to societies. The SGH team is also involved in the creation of geospatial data, which, combined with data from surveys, can allow for better recognition of the impact of the change on residents.

In conclusion, the establishment of the Families and Generations Lab is an important step towards the integration and coordination of research on demographic, social and intergenerational changes. The Lab will strengthen the SGH research potential and enable even more effective applications for prestigious national and international

projects, giving rise to more thorough analyses of key social phenomena. An important aspect of its activity will also be to popularise research results through the organisation of seminars and conferences, in support of scientific development of faculty and doctoral students as well as the exchange of knowledge with other research centres in Poland and abroad.

The Lab will actively develop cooperation with national and international academic institutions which explore research topics convergent with the Lab's area of interest, striving to create interdisciplinary research teams and implement joint projects. A key role in its activities will be played by the Council of the Families and Generations Lab chaired by Prof. Irena E. Kotowska, including outstanding SGH experts and international researchers associated with three European research infrastructures: Prof. Axel Börsch-Supan (SHARE), Prof. Anne H. Gauthier (GGP) and Prof. Gary Pollock (GUIDE). Thanks to the synergy of experience and research cooperation, the Lab will become an important centre of social analysis, supporting not only the development of science but also the development of effective public policies based on reliable data. 

HABILITATED DOCTOR AGNIESZKA CHŁOŃ-DOMIŃCZAK,
Professor at SGH, Vice Rector for Science, Director of the Institute of Statistics and Demography, Collegium of Economic Analysis, SGH

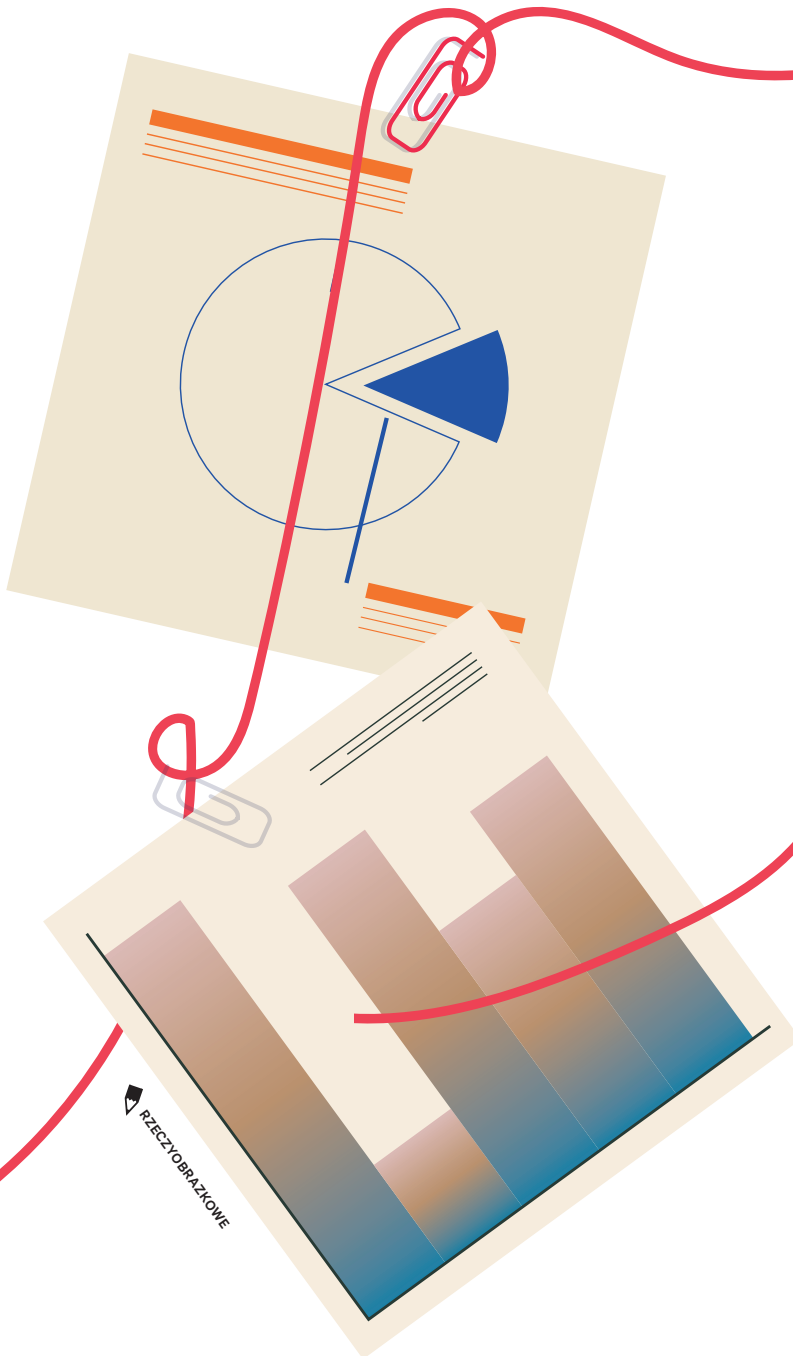
HABILITATED DOCTOR MONIKA MYNARSKA, associated Professor at the Institute of Statistics and Demography, Collegium of Economic Analysis, SGH



Our scientists – their silhouettes and research



We present three profiles of outstanding female researchers associated with the SGH Warsaw School of Economics. Their scientific achievements have an impact on our reality. The aim of the Regional Excellence Initiative Programme (RID) initiative is to show to a wider audience how the results of scientific research are applied in practice. **We hope that these stories will become an inspiration for the university community**, especially for young researchers beginning their academic careers.



HABILITATED DOCTOR
KATARZYNA
GÓRAK-SOSNOWSKA
Professor at SGH

On a formal level, my scientific career has always been troublesome for me, because it was difficult for me to fit into one specific scientific discipline. As a result, my education to date has been very diverse – I have not obtained more than one degree or professional title in any scientific discipline. I have a triple Master's degree (international economic and political relations, and management and marketing at the SGH Warsaw School of Economics, as

well as psychology at the University of Social Sciences and Humanities), a doctor of economics (SGH Warsaw School of Economics) and a postdoctoral degree in humanities in cultural and religious studies (Jagiellonian University). My interdisciplinarity, generally, gives me a wide field to discover new research paths, but sometimes it clearly does not resonate with me, especially when I am applying for further academic degrees.

Professionally, my academic life is associated with the SGH Warsaw School of Economics, where I started working in the Department of Sociology (again not a good fit), and then, after several years, moving to the Department of Political Studies at the Socio-Economic Collegium (partially

a good fit). Since 2018, I have been the head of the Middle East and Central Asia Department at the Institute of International Studies (ISM). While working at ISM, I began to identify more strongly with political science and administration (also due to the fact that since 2020 I have been a vice-president of the Scientific Council of the discipline of political science and administration, although nominally I hold only a master's degree in the related field).

In 2012, I was appointed Deputy Dean of the Master's Studies at the SGH Warsaw School of Economics for eight years. This new experience, or rather an adventure as a clerk, has strongly translated into my scientific interests, as well as my professional development, which



HABILITATED DOCTOR
IGA MAGDA
Professor at SGH

Head of the Department of Economics I and SGH Rector's Representative for Equal Treatment. She is also associated with the Institute for Structural Research Scientific Foundation and a member of the IZA Research Fellows network. In terms of research, she is interested in labour economics, in particular the subject of gender inequality in the labour market, family policy and social policy. She managed research projects financed by the European Commission, Norway Grants and the National Science

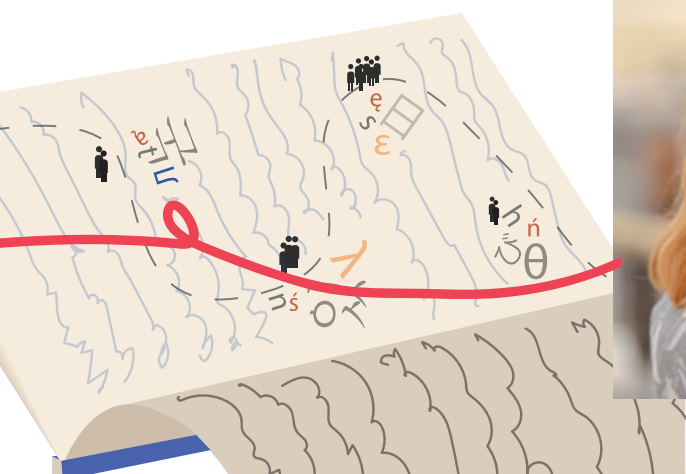
Centre (NCN). She has published, for example, in *Feminist Economics*, *Journal of Comparative Economics*, *IZA Journal of Labor Policy*, *Empirical Economics* or *Industrial Labour and Relations Review (ILRR)*.

In her research in recent years, Prof. Iga Magda has focused on various dimensions of inequality between women and men in employment and income, analysing individual stages of professional careers. For example, the article co-authored with Dr. Anna Knapieńska, Dr. Marzena Feldy and Dr. Jacek Bielecki and accepted for publication in the *Journal of Economic Inequality* analyses wage differences of doctoral graduates, focusing on the impact of parenthood on earnings.



HABILITATED DOCTOR
MONIKA
RAULINAJTYŚ-GRZYBEK
Professor at SGH

Head of the Management Accounting Department at SGH and #SGH for Healthcare Think Tank. Director of Executive SGH-WUM MBA in healthcare studies. Expert in the area of finance and management in healthcare and health policy. Member of the Tariffication Council of the 1st term at the Agency for Health Technology Assessment and Tariffication. She cooperates with medical entities as a management consultant in the area of controlling and a member of Social



I am currently pursuing at the Academic Administration Forum (FAA). For seven years, we have been organising nationwide industry conferences, attended by 300 to over 800 people. We also try to affect the provisions of generally applicable law. As a researcher, I naturally expanded the activities of the FAA to include research on higher education administration, which resulted in several collective publications and my recent monograph (*Non-academic employees. Around the Concept and Its Consequences*, Warsaw School of Economics: Warsaw 2024).

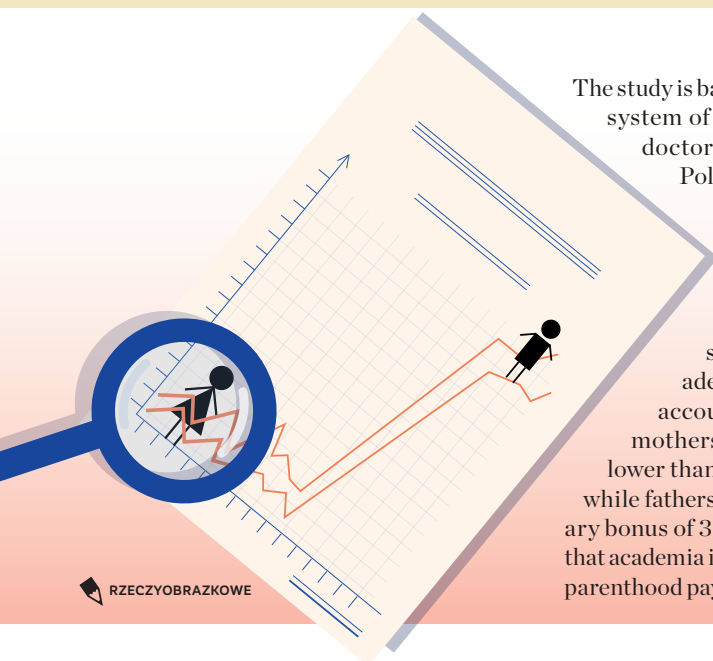
During over 20 years of professional work, I have been strongly involved in teaching and popularising activities. I have conducted classes at several universities, I have

also conducted several hundred hours of workshops for secondary school students as well as trainings for teachers and members of non-governmental organisations in the field of broadly understood interculturality, mainly in the context of Islam and Muslims. I have developed a dozen teaching materials (published on paper and online), three of which have been translated into foreign languages (English, Czech, Estonian, Latvian, Romanian, Hungarian).

Throughout my scientific life, I have tried to obtain grants to carry out my research, but I have only started implementing international projects of a scientific or scientific-educational nature since 2019. Since then, I have participated in the implementation of 12 projects financed from

domestic or foreign sources, of which in the case of seven I was the manager of the entire project, three – the manager of the Polish part of the project and two – the contractor. The domestic sources of funding include the National Science Centre (OPUS), NAWA (Strategic Partnerships, Intervention Grants) and the already completed the *Dialogue* programme of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, and foreign funding are Erasmus+ (Jean Monnet Project and Strategic Partnerships) and the European Commission (Programme and Horizon via CHANSE).

For my work at SGH, I have been receiving awards from the SGH Rector every year for almost a decade. My highest distinction so far is the award of the Minister



The study is based on data from the ELA system of the entire population of doctoral students employed at Polish universities in 2014–2018. The results showed a small but stable gender pay gap at the beginning of their academic careers, growing significantly when non-academic income is taken into account. The basic income of mothers in academia is 18-20% lower than that of childless women, while fathers receive a substantial salary bonus of 33-37%. The study proves that academia is not free from gender and parenthood pay inequalities. This article

was written as part of the OPUS project *Why do women earn less? The beginnings of the professional career of men and women*, financed by the National Science Centre, Poland.

The second article *Gender pay gaps across the STEM fields of study*, written as part of this project together with Dr. Tomasz Zajac, Dr. Agnieszka Chłoń-Domińczak, Dr. Marek Bożykowski and Dr. Mikołaj Jasiński, concerned the gender pay gap in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) fields of study. The study shows that in the first year after graduation, women earn over 20% less than men. This difference increases over time. There is also a significant variation across STEM, both in

Councils. She manages scientific and implementation projects related to the management of health services at the international and national level. One of the projects she leads is CaregIVR – on behalf of SGH, 9 research workers and a group of students participate in the project.

DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH

An important research project currently being carried out at the SGH Warsaw School of Economics in the area of health is the CaregIVR project, financed by the EU4Health programme, planned for 2024-2026. SGH operates in an international partnership of four universities – together with Atlântica – Instituto Universitário (Project Leader) from

Portugal, Universidad de Huelva from Spain and Università di Firenze from Italy. The competences of the SGH team in the area of management, public administration, as well as international contacts with Ukrainian partners and experience in working with the Ukrainian community are particularly valuable in the project. The call, under which the project is financed, was announced shortly after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine and one of its goals is to support Ukrainian citizens in improving their health competences and competences in the labour market.

The project is aimed at informal caregivers of people after a stroke. In Europe, approximately 2.5 million people suffer a stroke every year, and after leaving

hospital, many of them remain under the constant care of informal caregivers – people without medical education, most often family members or paid caregivers. These people are not covered by a structured training system, both in terms of patient care and in the organisation of space or household life with a person after a stroke. Healthcare focuses on supporting the patients themselves, not their informal caregivers. As a result, the potential of home care is not used as effectively as it could be – which is confirmed by the analysis of the literature. The competences of an informal caregiver in the field of care are important from the perspective of the patients themselves, because they receive better support in everyday life.

of Science obtained in 2024 for significant achievements in the field of scientific activity.

RESEARCH AND ITS IMPACT ON SOCIETY

I have decided to list three research areas which I will discuss in order of importance. These are: (1) Muslim communities in Poland; (2) research on higher education administration and (3) research on the contemporary Middle East and North Africa. I treat the first research area as the most important as I publish the results of my research in English in monographs and international journals. The research conducted in the second area is largely of an applied nature – importantly, that thanks to it I can

try to affect the socio-institutional reality. Research in the third area is of descriptive or problematic character and aims to supplement the knowledge in Polish about the contemporary Middle East.

MUSLIM COMMUNITIES IN POLAND

Muslim communities in Poland are my main area of research. I place them in the “Western” context and theoretical framework, showing the specificity of the functioning of these communities in the Polish social context. Thanks to this, my research can enter into a dialogue with English-language literature devoted to Muslim communities in the West. The research is interdisciplinary and addresses such issues as

Islamophobia, religion and religiosity, education and race. Some of the studies are descriptive – most often these are publications devoted to Poland in thematic foreign publications.

The dominant theme in this research is Islamophobia in Poland. I was interested in this topic in the context of the migration crisis, when for the first time on such a large scale anti-Muslim sentiments found their way into the public space, and in the following years they became an important element of the political campaign. I was interested in why the Polish society, in which the number of Muslims is so insignificant, shows strongly negative – compared to the countries of the so-called old European Union – attitudes towards Islam and Muslims.

terms of size of the gender pay gap and how it changes over time. This difference is largest among graduates of mathematics and amounts to over 25%, while among graduates of chemical and earth sciences it does not exceed 3%. As these gaps narrow only slightly over the first four years of graduates' careers, the efforts made by policymakers to increase the number of women pursuing STEM degrees may not be sufficient to achieve the gender pay equality. The article was published in the journal *Studies in Higher Education*.

In another article, Prof. Magda and her co-authors from the SGH Warsaw School of Economics (Dr. Agnieszka Chłóń-Domińczak, Dr. Magdalena Smyk,

Dr. Paweł Strzelecki, Prof. Irena Kotowska and Karolina Bolesta) investigate the impact formal and informal childcare in early childhood and education policies on the employment of women and men and the pay gap, taking into account the life stages characteristic of childcare tasks. Early care and education policies are framed by the types of social investment strategies identified in the EU countries to illustrate changes in social investment since 2005. The research shows that better provision and use of early childhood education and care not only contributes to early investment in human capital, but also facilitates the employment of mothers, thereby helping to reduce the gender employment and pay gap.

Part of Prof. Magda's research focuses on enterprises. The article *Gender pay gaps in domestic and foreign-owned firms*, published in *Empirical Economics*, written with dr. Katarzyna Sałach, shows that the gender pay gap is higher in foreign-owned enterprises. The text *The gender wage gap in the workplace: does the age of the firm matter?*, written with Dr. Ewa Cukrowska-Torzewska for the *European Journal of Industrial Economics* indicates that the wage differences between women and men are smallest in the youngest companies. In Central European countries, the size of the gender pay gap clearly increases with the age of the company; while in the older EU member states such a relationship does not exist.

They are also important from a systemic perspective – the currently implemented reform of the health care system indicates reversing the pyramid of benefits, i.e. providing support as close to the patient as possible and at the lowest possible cost. The basis of the model of the proper pyramid is self-care and home care, including that provided by informal caregivers.

The aim of the project is to create diverse tools that will be useful in raising the level of knowledge and developing competences of informal caregivers. A certain novelty is the use of virtual reality to train informal caregivers. After putting on VR glasses, the participant will be able to obtain information on how to perform basic activities with the patient, as

well as how to prepare the space to support everyday life. A set of possible scenarios was developed during activities of twelve focus groups conducted in four countries. The participants discussed the challenges faced by informal caregivers and the needs in terms of knowledge and competences. The substantive basis for developing the focus group scenarios were the results of previously conducted research – a literature review (rapid review method), quantitative analysis of health data on the patient population and quantitative research among informal caregivers (a survey on 120 informal caregivers).

Qualitative research will allow for the extraction of several dozen scenarios, which the project team grouped into

three basic categories: better understanding of the patient, improving competences in the field of care and improving the emotional state of caregivers. The first category includes scenarios that allow us to better empathise with what the patient is struggling with. A stroke causes health effects that may be difficult to imagine for a healthy person. An example of such an effect is hemispheric neglect syndrome, which involves not seeing half of the space on the opposite side of the brain to the hemisphere where the stroke occurred. A “half” image of the world can be conveyed by virtual reality and allows us to understand why the patient is afraid to walk down the street or corridor – which in their eyes borders on an

I soon became convinced that the attitude of Poles towards Islam and Muslims is related to the discourse on Islam in Western European countries and the specific position of Poland in the EU. I was particularly interested in the image of Islam and the behaviour of Muslim students in the school context. As part of the EMPATHY project, I coordinated research on Polish textbooks in terms of themes about Islam and Muslims. I also conducted a study among Muslim adults who attended Polish schools, looking at their behavioural strategies as “the only Muslims in the classroom” (and sometimes also at school).

Another area of my research is the religion and religiosity of Muslim communities in Poland, especially converts to Islam.

The research on Polish female converts to Islam has become the subject of an NCN OPUS grant. Publications that have been created as a result of this project, including the main monograph *Managing spoiled identity. The case of Polish female converts to Islam* (co-authors: B. Abdallah-Krzepkowska, J. Krotofil, A. Piela), published by Brill publishing house (Leiden 2023), show the behaviour of Polish female converts to Islam in the specific Polish socio-cultural context and their religious socialisation to Islam. Importantly, online sources play an important role in learning Islam. I continue this topic in the DIGITISLAM project (within a CHANSE project coordinated by the University of Edinburgh), in which we are exploring Muslim online spaces

together with teams from the UK, Spain, Sweden and Lithuania.

HIGHER EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION

The issue of higher education administration is the only area that does not fit in with my other research in any way. I became interested in it when I was a Vice-Dean at the SGH Master Study Dean's Office for purely practical reasons: I wondered how to optimise the work of this unit at the beginning of the academic year, when there is the greatest accumulation of tasks. At that time, I initiated research on the effectiveness of the operation of dean's offices at universities, which resulted in the organisation of a nationwide conference for dean's offices staff.

The levels of gender pay inequality appear to be highest in the previously state-owned companies privatised during the transition period.

The work *Gender dimension of occupational exposure to infection in Europe*, published in *Feminist Economics*, combines the subject of gender inequality with the issues of a different position of women and men in healthcare systems. Women in Europe are more likely to be infected because they are more likely to work in occupations that require a high level of contact and physical proximity at work, according to the study. Women are also less likely to work remotely, which contributes to their increased exposure. The study found out that gender is a more important factor in

workers' exposure to infection than their education or age.

In 2024, the *Journal of Family and Economic Issues* published the article by Iga Magda, Ewa Cukrowska-Torzewska and Marta Palczyńska *What if she earns more? Gender norms, income inequality and distribution of domestic work*, examining the relationship between women's contribution to household income and the distribution of domestic work between partners, while taking into account their attitudes towards gender roles.

In her research work, Iga Magda also addresses the issues of active labour market policy and the situation of young people on the labour market. These issues are the subject of the article *Labour*

market policy for youth in Poland, written with Karol Madoń, Marta Palczyńska and Mateusz Smoter, published in *Gospodarka Narodowa*. The Polish Journal of Economics.

The results of Prof. Magda's research have been presented many times at international conferences and seminars. In addition to contributing to science, they also have a practical dimension, supporting evidence-based policies on gender equality in the labour market. For example, the implementation of the project *Why do women earn less? The beginnings of the professional careers of men and women* allowed to expand the knowledge of the sources of wage inequality between women and men. This knowledge is

abyss or nothingness. Unfortunately, VR is not able to answer all problems equally well. One such example is aphasia, or patient's inability to speak. Such problems will be presented in the project using more traditional tools – recordings or expert statements.

The second category concerns all activities performed by the caregiver, which initially arouse great fear and concern about harming the patient. Sometimes it is also forgotten that activities requiring force (e.g. moving the patient), if performed incorrectly, can harm the caregiver. Strokes are more common among men, and their informal caregiver is usually the wife. The teams identified over 30 scenarios covering, for example, feeding,

dressing, and toileting, as well as issues related to preparing the home to receive the patient and providing first aid. VR glasses allow for operation in three-dimensional space, for example in the apartment scenario. Currently, the team of developers is creating selected scenarios, which should be available for testing in early 2025.

The aim of the project is not only to better prepare caregivers to care for the patient, but also to equip them with tools that will allow them to take better care of their own health. As research conducted in many places around the world shows, caring for a chronically ill person (after a stroke) increases the risk of cardiovascular diseases, as well as depression.

Therefore, the last group of scenarios includes aspects related to issues such as respite care for the caregiver or relaxation mechanisms.

The next steps in the project will include testing the developed tool in four laboratories, organised in four universities participating in the project. We are also planning such meetings at SGH and organisations offering support to stroke patients and their families.

SOCIAL IMPACT

The use of new technologies in healthcare has the potential to increase efficiency in areas where we have not achieved positive results so far – primarily due to the budget, staffing or other constraints. In the face of


While academic teachers naturally present their research and discuss it with each other at scientific conferences, there were no similar events for university administrative staff.


The contact with administrative staff on a different level than the hierarchical official relations in my own unit made me realise how much both groups of university staff – academic teachers and non-academic staff – differ from each other in terms of status, and also allowed me to gain insight into this internally diverse professional group. I usually prepare these publications in co-authorship with administrative staff – not only to use their expert knowledge, but also to give them a voice in matters that concern them.

RESEARCH ON THE CONTEMPORARY MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA


After obtaining my postdoctoral degree, I dealt with the Middle Eastern issues to a limited extent; most of my studies on this region are synthetic and descriptive, and I prepare them on an ad hoc basis – usually following an invitation to publication. Sometimes I come across niches that have not been developed, but I think it is worth it – this is how the monograph *Takaful – Muslim insurance* (Warsaw School of Economics, 2020) was created, developed with Dr. Renata Pajewska-Kwaśny, which was the first and (probably still is) the only publication in Polish on Muslim insurance.

Recently, I have managed to find a niche in which I can deal with the Middle

East in such a way that the results of my research are part of international research. The contribution to outlining this niche was the field research in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, which I conducted in July 2023. Conversations with Polish businessmen directed my interests towards Polish labour migrants in the Persian Gulf countries. These people are described as expats (and not labour migrants, as Polish immigrants in Western Europe often are referred to) and coming from the West (which is interesting in the context of the problematic semi-peripherality of Poland in Europe/West). I want to develop these topics as part of the CEEMEA project (NAWA grant – Strategic Partnerships, which I obtained in July this year). 

necessary, for example, to implement the EU Pay Transparency Directive. The directive requires decision-makers to build a system for monitoring the wages of men and women in various dimensions. The acquired knowledge also allowed for cooperation in the development of the draft law on the pay gap. An example of practical promotion of research results can be the presentation of the results of research and analyses of the pay gap during the last February meeting of the Council for Women in the Labour Market at the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy, responsible for the transposition of the Directive. 

medical staff shortages, health education or prevention issues always fade into the background in the face of the need to provide immediate services. However, this is a long-term goal that has the potential to improve the health of the population, and that is why we should not lose sight of it.

The concept which is being developed fits the needs of informal caregivers – as confirmed by the conducted surveys and conclusions from focus groups. A ready tool may be used by caregivers, for example, during the patient's stay in hospital or in another organisation providing support to patients and their families. It can support medical personnel in the process of educating patients and their families. 



↑ **Women of Science** podcast produced by the SGH Warsaw School of Economics in cooperation with Radio 357. Published in cooperation with Regional Initiative of Excellence and Ministry of Science and Higher Education. Co-financed by the Minister of Science and Higher Education under the programme Regional Initiative of Excellence.

AI Lab: Bridging technology and economic sciences through research and education

 TYMOTEUSZ DOLIGALSKI, BOGUMIŁ KAMIŃSKI

The AI Lab at the SGH Warsaw School of Economics serves as **a crucial bridge between the cutting-edge technology on the one and economic, management and public policy sciences fostering interdisciplinary dialogue and research on the other hand**. The AI Lab activities include training the SGH employees and organising conferences and seminars. We also conduct talks on a potential cooperation with external institutions.



An important aspect of the AI Lab activities involves training sessions, which garnered significant interest last semester. The introductory training, “Generative AI Tools in Academic Teaching (Basic Level)”, presented the specificity and diversity of generative AI services in the context of academic work. This training was conducted by doctoral candidate Sylwia Stefaniak. The next session focused on “Using Generative AI Tools in Writing Scientific Papers”. The subsequent training addressed “Recognising Content Created Using Generative AI”, which sparked discussions about how academic teachers should scrutinise students’ work to verify its originality. Additionally, participants discussed potential changes to theses requirements to ensure

students get engaged in more independent work (such as conducting original research). These sessions were led by Professor Tymoteusz Doligalski, Vice-Director of the AI Lab. The final training in this series covered “Creating Graphics Using Generative AI” and was presented by practitioner Glib Skrypka, who teaches similar subjects at the SGH postgraduate studies. It is worth noting that recordings of these training sessions are available to university staff on the RID website. New training sessions are planned for the near future.

The conference *AI Spring: How to Research Artificial Intelligence in Economic Sciences?* brought together various experts who shared their experiences and insights on researching artificial intelligence in the context of social and economic sciences. Among the speakers were Professor Anna Morgan-Thomas from the University of Glasgow, Doctor Ryszard Ćwiartniak from the Krakow University of Economics, Doctor Leszek Bukowski and Doctor Andrzej Klimczuk from the SGH. The discussion highlighted several key themes, including the role of AI as a “supporting actor” in research, with studies often focusing on relationships between AI and organisations, people or the economy. Professor Morgan-Thomas asked a question how to make AI a primary actor in research, while Doctor Ćwiartniak emphasised that AI should remain a supporting tool where users are crucial. Doctor Klimczuk pointed out that legal and economic institutions struggle to keep pace with rapid technological changes. Doctor Bukowski mentioned that computer scientists are increasingly asking philosophical questions, such as whether large language models truly understand the meaning of words. Such questions about the meaning of language and the relationship between language and the world, previously the domain of philosophy, are now being approached experimentally.

In the subsequent part of the conference, there were twenty papers with a management and social focus presented, alongside sixteen papers examining AI applications from analytical and quantitative perspectives. Additionally, students delivered six papers. As organisers, we were surprised by the interdisciplinary approaches to the AI research. The presentations covered a broad spectrum of topics, ranging from purely social issues

(AI and seniors) through numerous management and economic themes to typically technical subjects (evaluation of LLM fine-tuning methods). This diversity demonstrated the multifaceted nature of AI research and highlighted the importance of cross-disciplinary collaboration in advancing our understanding of artificial intelligence in economic sciences.

The conference *Digital Platforms* organised by the AI Lab SGH in collaboration with DELab UW, took place in December 2024, featuring a diverse programme exploring the economics and management aspects of digital platforms. The event opened with a panel debate on researching digital platforms in economic sciences, followed by parallel sessions covering business models, marketing approaches, industry applications, and financial perspectives. The session entitled *Big Tech, Big Trouble?* generated the most interest among participants, addressing critical issues such as regulatory challenges for tech giants, legal regulations affecting gatekeeping platforms, self-preferencing as a form of market dominance abuse, and compliance analysis of e-commerce platforms with competition and consumer protection laws. The conference concluded with sessions on AI and Metaverse applications, highlighting the transformative potential of these technologies in reshaping digital ecosystems. It is worth emphasising that both conferences were organised via MS Teams without fees and were open to everyone. We have also published the monograph on digital platforms. The monograph entitled **PLATFORMY CYFROWE. MODEL BIZNESU, ZASTOSOWANIA, UŻYTKOWNICY** contains more than twenty chapters written by various researchers. The book is available as a PDF file for free download.

Another field of activity of the AI Lab is the SGcHat podcast series, in which we speak with representatives of the university, like Professors Tomasz Szapiro and Paweł Prałat, or collaborating companies, like Google, PwC and Accenture, about topics at the intersection of economics and technology. In a podcast entitled *Big Tech Companies That Are Now With Us*, Professor Michał Goliński discussed the impact of Big Tech on our lives and how these companies have become ubiquitous and an inseparable part of our daily existence. He also addressed the topic of Big Tech's power over the world, its influence on politics and society, and issues of privacy and digital dementia. In another podcast called *Consumer Trends in an Analogue-Digital Crucible* Professor Bogdan Mróz presented his original 6E concept. Specifically, he explained how social media behaviours are characterised by the following dimensions: expression, extraversion, exhibitionism, escapism, ephemerality, and eccentricity.

Together with Google, the AI Lab team prepared the Skills of Tomorrow AI programme. This is a 5-week intensive course for Small and Medium Companies on business applications of artificial intelligence tools. The course was organised in the period from January to February 2025 and involved 20,000 AI pioneers. There is a plan to organise next editions of programmes targeted at Polish citizens in the coming months. More information about this programme can be found in a separate article in this issue of the *SGH Magazine*.


An important activity of the centre is cooperation with industry partners. Currently, the centre has agreements regarding joint activities with the PZU group and the PKO BP group. In both cases the objective is to leverage the expert knowledge of the SGH Warsaw School of Economics professors in the area of AI and advanced data analytics applied to practical business problems. Importantly, we want to involve our University

students in these activities and give them an opportunity to develop their professional skills.

Within the AI Lab unit at SGH, there is a Student Data Science Club, which is an organisation for students who are enthusiastic about data analysis and the exploration of new technologies and tools. As part of its activities, the organisation offers its members opportunities to participate in courses and training programmes in data processing and analysis. In addition to making them acquire practical skills and keeping them up-to-date with the latest technologies, it also organises meetings with industry experts. During the winter semester of 2024, the organisation hosted representatives from Procter & Gamble and Accenture Poland, who shared their insights on automating data analytics in the cloud and implementing Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) in the financial sector. Participants gained valuable knowledge on best DevOps practices, data quality challenges, and key aspects of AI implementation in banking.

Beyond enhancing their skills, members of the organisation actively contribute to organising various events. In November 2024, the club co-organised the *ML in PL Conference* at the Copernicus Science Centre in Warsaw and served as a knowledge partner for the 10th edition of BEST Hacking League – one of the largest student hackathons at the Warsaw University of Technology. The club does not only help organise such events but also actively participates in them. Its members regularly compete in hackathons and analytics competitions, applying their knowledge in practice and tackling real-world industry challenges. In addition, it continues to expand its activities, providing students with a platform for learning and networking with industry professionals. In 2025, the organisation will further develop its initiatives, including the publication of the next edition of the Data-Driven Magazine, training programmes in advanced data analytics, the organisation of our own hackathon and additional meetings with business leaders.

The members of AI Lab concentrate on preparation of policy papers in the scope of application of artificial intelligence. We worked together with Global Partnership for Artificial Intelligence ([HTTPS://GPAI.AI/](https://GPAI.AI/)) preparing recommendations regarding the best practices of development of AI solutions. The results are summarised in the Constructive Approach to Smart Technologies report ([HTTPS://GPAI.AI/PROJECTS/FUTURE-OF-WORK/FOW3_CAST.PDF](https://GPAI.AI/PROJECTS/FUTURE-OF-WORK/FOW3_CAST.PDF)). We have also developed Index of Digital Transformation: measuring the digital maturity of companies listed on the Warsaw Stock Exchange ([HTTPS://PS.STAT.GOV.PL/ARTICLE/2024/2/001-019](https://PS.STAT.GOV.PL/ARTICLE/2024/2/001-019)). Currently, we are working on a comprehensive review of the adoption of digital technologies, in the sectors of SMEs and large companies, with a special focus on AI. These results will be communicated during the *Economic Forum* held in Karpacz in 2025.

If you would like to follow updates about activity of our laboratory, you can find them on our website [HTTPS://WWW.SGH.WAW.PL/AI-LAB](https://www.sgh.waw.pl/AI-LAB) and subscribe to our page on LinkedIn [HTTPS://WWW.LINKEDIN.COM/COMPANY/92518858/ADMIN/DASHBOARD/](https://www.linkedin.com/company/92518858/admin/dashboard/). 

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PROFESSOR BOGUMIŁ KAMIŃSKI, Director at AI Lab – Intercollegiate Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Digital Platforms, Head of Decision Analysis and Support Unit, Collegium of Economic Analysis, SGH

Google and AI Lab SGH Boost the AI Skills of SMEs

CEZARY JARONI, BOGUMIŁ KAMIŃSKI

Launched in January 2025, **"Skills of Tomorrow: AI"** is a free, intensive AI training programme for SMEs offered by Google and SGH Warsaw School of Economics. The programme comprised five weeks of focused instruction. There were **20,000 participants** from SMEs, gaining **practical competencies** in AI and learning how to become AI pioneers in their organisations.



AI AS A CATALYST FOR GROWTH

Poland's economy is poised for a significant opportunity provided by the AI revolution. According to a report by Implement Consulting Group, effective AI implementation could increase Poland's GDP by up to 8%—about EUR 55 billion annually—over the next decade. It is estimated that 59% of this growth would come from boosting employee productivity.

The Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (PARP) data indicate that the SME sector generates almost half of Poland's GDP (45.3%) and employs 6.9 million people. With AI, small and medium-sized enterprises—already the backbone of the national economy—can achieve faster growth by gaining access to advanced tools previously reserved for large corporations.

Yet 43% of SMEs cite a lack of appropriate skills as the primary barrier to fully leveraging AI within their organisations. The growing interest in AI across the country is evident in Google search

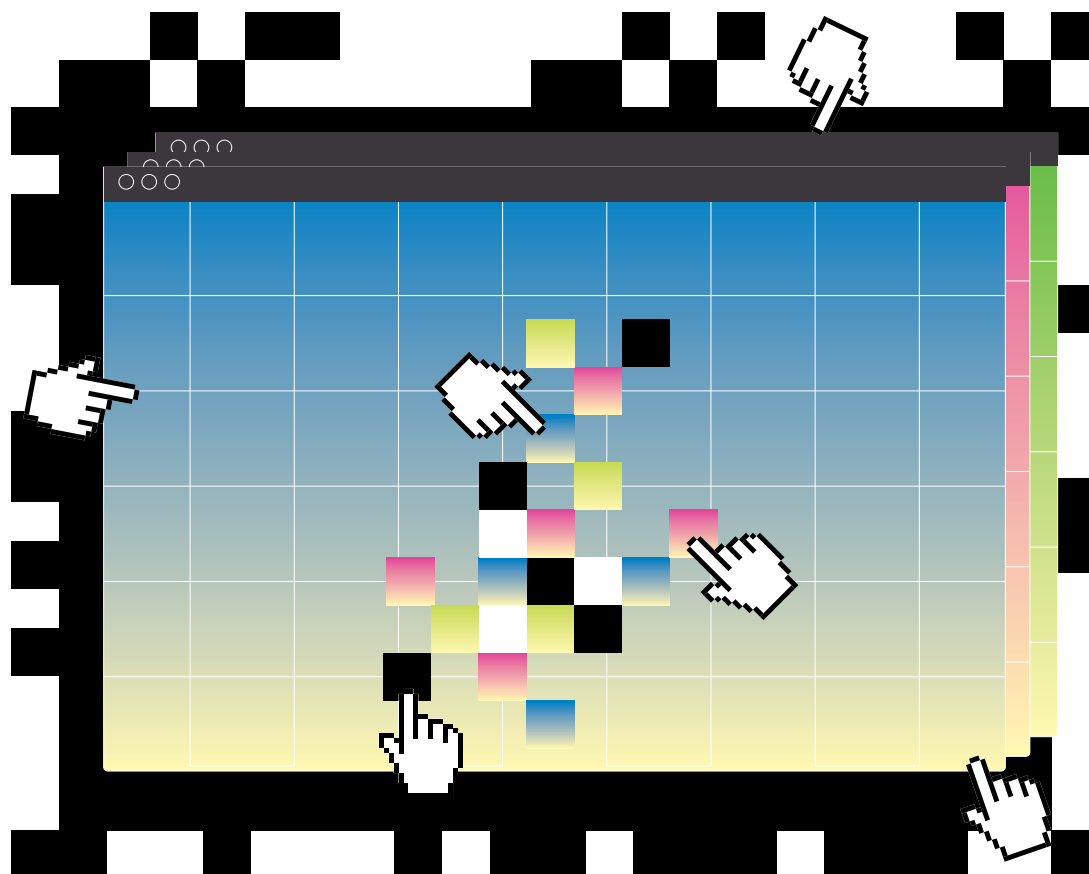
data, which shows that searches related to artificial intelligence increased by as much as 60% in 2024. This trend underscores how AI is increasingly viewed as a key driver of competitiveness and efficiency among Polish businesses.

20,000 AI PIONEERS

The "Skills of Tomorrow: AI" programme, prepared by Google and AI Lab SGH under the honorary patronage of the Minister of Digital Affairs, was designed to address the needs of specialists and entrepreneurs and level the playing field for Polish SMEs. Its goal is to equip specialists and SME owners with the practical know-how to become AI pioneers, focusing on real-world business applications, change management, and AI tools.

The programme initially aimed to train 10,000 participants, but due to the enormous interest, with 40,000 applications, the organisers decided to double the number of places up to 20,000.





RZECZYOBRAZKOWE

A FIVE-WEEK PROGRAMME NEARING COMPLETION

A free five-week "Skills of Tomorrow: AI" programme offered 25 hours of prerecorded lessons and webinars led by experts from Google, AI Lab SGH and the business community. Through the training provided, participants learned how to work with AI and leverage it for personal productivity and business success. The curriculum was structured in five modules over five weeks.


- ➔ Week 1: Fundamentals of Working with AI & Personal Productivity
- ➔ Week 2: Application of AI in Business Development and Marketing
- ➔ Week 3: Analytical Thinking & Data Analysis with AI
- ➔ Week 4: AI Solutions in Google Cloud for Business Growth
- ➔ Week 5: Organisational Transformation with AI

Google and AI Lab SGH developed this curriculum based on expert knowledge, research, and numerous interviews with specialists and SME owners. The preparations took over six months of intense market research and course planning. On the Google's part, Cezary Jaroni, an SGH alumnus, coordinated the programme. From AI Lab SGH, Bogumił Kamiński was responsible for the overall execution of the project, Albert Tomaszewski managed the course curriculum planning, and Paweł Kubicki headed the team responsible for measuring the programme's impact on the participants' careers. We plan to share the lessons learned from the project during the *34th Economic Forum in Karpacz*. Additionally, Google and AI Lab SGH have already started

discussing the next initiatives that would improve AI literacy in the Polish society.

Graduates will receive a *Using AI for Business Development* certificate, awarded jointly by Google and SGH.

"This programme has a very practical dimension. It helps small and medium-sized entrepreneurs catch up on AI and learn how to apply this new knowledge directly in their business operations. At SGH, we have outstanding AI specialists, organised within our Intercollegiate Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Digital Platforms – AI Lab SGH, led by Professor Bogumił Kamiński. I'm glad our experts and Google specialists co-created this unique training program. It will help business owners become familiar with AI and use it daily to run their companies. The AI revolution is happening before our eyes. If Polish entrepreneurs don't hop on this train in time, they risk losing competitiveness," explains Piotr Wachowiak, Rector of SGH.

This initiative marks another successful collaboration between Google and SGH. In the previous editions of "Skills of Tomorrow" – Poland's most effective upskilling programme – 17,000 people completed a course in online marketing, with one-third finding new employment after receiving their certificates. 

CEZARY JARONI, coordinator of the *Skills of Tomorrow: AI* programme
from Google Poland

PROFESSOR BOGUMIŁ KAMIŃSKI, Director at AI Lab – Intercollegiate Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Digital Platforms, Head of Decision Analysis and Support Unit, Collegium of Economic Analysis, SGH

Open Economic University of SGH

A new standard in economic education for everyone

 EWELINA SZCZECZ-PIETKIEWICZ



SGH Warsaw School of Economics, one of the most renowned economic universities in Poland and Central and Eastern Europe, is launching an innovative educational project – the Open Economic University of SGH. This unique initiative is aimed at all individuals interested in acquiring reliable knowledge in economics, finance and management. The programme offers the opportunity to participate in free lectures conducted by academic experts, ensuring broad access to high-quality economic knowledge.

The open university was created so as to promote economic education and raise public awareness of market mechanisms and financial management. This initiative responds to the growing need for access to reliable and practical information about the economy, both in the context of daily life and professional careers.

MOTIVATIONS BEHIND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE OPEN ECONOMIC UNIVERSITY OF SGH

The decision to create OUE was driven by two key factors. First, research highlights the need to improve the economic literacy in society. For example, 22% of Poles believe that when the state has budget deficits, it should print more money, which indicates gaps in understanding inflation mechanisms. At the same time, 54% of respondents admit that better financial knowledge would be useful in their daily lives. Given this situation, the economic education becomes crucial for the improved performance of an individual and the society as a whole.

Second, this initiative aligns with the SGH mission, which emphasises the promotion of

economic knowledge in society and inspiring citizens to actively participate in the country's economic life. SGH has been a leader in economic education for years, and the Open Economic University is another step towards fulfilling this mission.

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND KEY ASSUMPTIONS

The Open Economic University of SGH programme consists of three educational pathways, tailored to different target groups:

- The general pathway, aimed at a broad audience, enabling the acquisition of fundamental economic knowledge.
- The journalists' pathway, designed for media professionals who wish to gain a deeper understanding of economic issues and report on them more accurately.
- The teachers' pathway, supporting educators in effectively conveying economic knowledge in an engaging and accessible manner.

Within the general pathway, participants can choose from four thematic blocks, covering both basic and advanced topics.

The first of these is the "Economics and Finance" block, which forms the foundation of the programme and offers the opportunity to earn a certificate. It covers topics such as economic growth, labour market, demographics, financial system and personal financial management strategies. Lectures are delivered by esteemed SGH experts, including Prof. Łukasz Woźny, Prof. Jakub Growiec, Prof. Iga Magda and Prof. Agnieszka Alińska.

Another offer is the "European Union" block, which focuses on the functioning of the EU, its international relations, and key political and economic challenges. The topics covered in this cycle include migration policy, the EU cooperation with the USA and East Asia, lobbying and relations with Ukraine. Classes will be run by a team led by prof. Małgorzata Mołęda-Zdziech including experts such as prof. Katarzyna Piekarska, dr. Jan Misiuła, dr. Marta Pachocka, dr. Piotr R. Kozłowski and dr. Iryna Degtyarova.



PHOTO: PIOTR POTAPOWICZ SGH

People interested in developing managerial competencies can participate in the “Management” block, which covers leadership, strategic analysis, organizational culture, and change management. Participants gain the necessary skills to effectively lead teams and make sound business decisions. Didactic team leader for this block is prof. Maria Aluchna who will deliver classes together with dr. Agata Chutnik and dr. Dominika Bosek-Rak.

The fourth block – “Sustainable Development and ESG” – addresses challenges related to environmental protection, corporate social responsibility, and sustainability reporting. In an era of climate change and increasing ESG-related requirements for businesses, this knowledge is crucial both for professionals and informed consumers. This block is lead by dr. Ewa Jastrzębska who cooperates with prof. Agata Lulewicz-Sas, dr. Paulina Legutko-Kobus, dr. Aleksandra Stanek-Kowalczyk and prof. Ewelina Szczech-Pietkiewicz.

FLEXIBLE FORMAT AND CERTIFICATION

Classes at the Open Economic University of SGH are held every two weeks, allowing participants to balance education with daily responsibilities. Each participant can freely choose the thematic blocks of interest and attend as many lectures as they wish.

The participation in the “Economics and Finance” block offers the opportunity to earn a certificate, which serves as formal proof of acquired knowledge and may be a valuable asset in the job market. To obtain the certificate, participants must

✦ The inaugural lecture “Why do we learn economics?” was given by Professor Łukasz Woźny

attend at least two-thirds of the lectures and pass a multiple-choice exam. The issuance of certificate requires a symbolic administrative fee of PLN 100.

Meanwhile, participation in additional thematic blocks – “European Union,” “Management,” and “Sustainable Development and ESG” – leads to a certificate of attendance, granted based on participation in at least four lectures.

SPECIALISED OFFER FOR JOURNALISTS AND TEACHERS

The Open Economic University of SGH also offers a dedicated programme for journalists and teachers. The journalists’ pathway includes intensive two-day seminars, during which SGH experts explain key topics in macroeconomics, microeconomics, financial markets and ESG in a comprehensible manner. The workshops cover such topics as interpreting economic data, analysing corporate financial reports and understanding the impact of global trends on capital markets.


The teachers’ pathway is conducted online, enabling teachers to more effectively convey economic knowledge to their students. With access to teaching materials and educational tools, teachers can enhance their teaching methods and better prepare young people for informed participation in economic life.

SUCCESS OF THE ENROLMENT PROCESS AND FUTURE PLANS

The enrolment for the first semester of OUE turned out to be an overwhelming success – all available places were filled within a single day. Such a high demand confirms the need for educational initiatives of this kind and motivates SGH to further develop the programme.

In response to increasing interest, plans are in place to expand the programme in future semesters by introducing new, engaging topics and blocks. The Open Economic University of SGH aims to better cater to participants’ needs, providing a broader and more in-depth exploration of economic issues.

JOIN THE OPEN ECONOMIC UNIVERSITY OF SGH

The Open Economic University of SGH is a unique initiative that not only raises the level of economic knowledge in society but also brings together diverse social groups around the common goal of better understanding economic mechanisms. Thanks to the dedication of experts and a flexible learning model, OUE is becoming a place where knowledge meets practice and participants acquire skills useful in both professional and personal life. 

HABILITATED DOCTOR EWELINA SZCZECH-PIETKIEWICZ, Professor at SGH, the academic supervisor of the Open Economic University of SGH, Head of the Institute of International Economic Policy, Collegium of World Economy, SGH

Media power and branding at SGH

 MARZANNA WITEK-HAJDUK



Creating a strong brand should be an important element of managing the organisation, including institutions such as universities. In this process, an important role is played by the monitoring of various dimensions of the brand evaluation. In the TOP MARKA (TOP BRAND) 2024 survey, the Warsaw School of Economics was rated the third strongest brand among universities for another year.

Brand evaluation is performed from the perspective of (1) brand equity, (2) brand strength and (3) brand value, which refer to two key dimensions of brand evaluation, i.e. (a) the marketing dimension (assessment of brand equity and strength) and (b) the financial dimension, related to the valuation of brand value as an intangible asset of the organisation.

Brand equity (also referred to in the literature as Consumer Based Brand Equity – CBBE) is defined by D. Aaker (1996) as a set of assets and liabilities related to a brand, its name, symbol, which determine the value (utility) of a product (goods or services) marked with a brand for the buyer. The key attributes of brand equity are: (1) brand awareness, i.e. the ability of a current or potential buyer to recognise and/or recall that a given brand is assigned to a specific product category, (2) brand loyalty, i.e. a combination of buyers' attitudes and behaviours reflecting their tendency to constantly buy products of the same brand and their attachment to it, (3) brand image, which may consist of, for example, associations with the product (product range, product attributes, quality, value, use, users, country of origin), with the organisation (organisational attributes, range of operation: local or global); associations with a person (personality, brand-buyer relationships), with brand symbols (visual brand form,

brand reputation, metaphor related to the brand), and (4) perceived brand quality, i.e. subjective quality perceived and attributed to the brand by buyers. In many cases, the perceived quality is a fundamental element of the brand image. The brand strength is linked to the market position of the brand and is identified with the strength of buyers' demand for products marked with this brand in relation to the demand for products of competing brands. On the other hand, the value of brand is combined with the monetary valuation of the brand as an intangible asset of the company. It should be emphasised that the strength of the brand is determined by the brand capital and has an impact on its value, and a brand with a significant capital, strength and value is an important factor in increasing the value of the organisation.

The growing significance of brands in the strategies of both business companies and non-for-profit institutions has resulted in the development of various methods of brand evaluation, as well as the creation of many brand rankings.

The methods of brand evaluation include

(1) marketing (psychographic/behavioural) methods of brand evaluation, which are characterised by a qualitative approach to brand evaluation and refer to psychographic and behavioural, i.e. related to the behaviour and attitudes of buyers, determinants of brand equity (including, for example, the concept of brand equity assessment according to D. Aaker);

(2) financial methods of brand valuation, i.e. quantitative procedures for the monetary valuation of the brand, including the cost-based valuation method, the royalty relief valuation method, the market-based valuation method);

(3) mixed financial and marketing methods of brand evaluation, in which both quantitative, also financial and qualitative indicators of assessing the market, psychographic and profitability position of a given brand are used (e.g. the method developed by the consulting company Interbrand),

(4) other, including e.g. portfolio methods of brand evaluation, which consist in the creation of relative brand evaluation indexes.

For many years, numerous institutions have been preparing brand rankings. They apply various

methodologies, including various approaches to brand evaluation as well as various indicators of their evaluation. In addition, these rankings vary in terms of geographical coverage (rankings on brands in a given country versus rankings in an international dimension) and also include brands of different types of organisations (e.g. only corporate brands or brands of other institutions, e.g. non-profit, cultural or sporting organisations). The best-known rankings of international brands include, for example, the Internbrand Best Global Brands ranking ([HTTPS://INTERBRAND.COM/BEST-GLOBAL-BRANDS/](https://interbrand.com/best-global-brands/)), Brand Finance Global 500 ([HTTPS://BRANDFINANCE.COM/INSIGHTS/GLOBAL-500-2024-REPORT](https://brandfinance.com/insights/global-500-2024-report)), Kantar BrandZ Most Valuable Global Brands ([HTTPS://WWW.KANTAR.COM/CAMPAIGNS/BRANDZ-DOWNLOADS/KANTAR-BRANDZ-MOST-VA...](https://www.kantar.com/campaigns/brandz-downloads/kantar-brandz-most-valuable...)). On the Polish market, we have rankings like *Rzeczpospolita* Ranking of the most valuable Polish brands ([HTTPS://RANKINGI.RP.PL/RANKINGMAREK/2021](https://rankingi.rp.pl/rankingmarek/2021)), TOP 200 of the best Polish brands – ranking of the “Forbes” magazine and the research company Minds & Roses ([HTTPS://WWW.FORBES.PL/RANKINGI/](https://www.forbes.pl/rankingi/top-200-najlepszych-polskich-marek-ranki...)).

One of the rankings of brand evaluation on the Polish market is “500 strongest brands in Poland. Top Marka” prepared by the *Press* magazine and PSM Monitoring & More, including an overall ranking and 50 industry rankings. Due to the adopted method of evaluating brands, this ranking should be included in the category of “other methods”. This is because it is – as the authors of the study declare themselves – a comparison of the evaluation of brands with the use of indicators measuring only their presence/visibility in the media (“media coverage”), such as: (1) “impact” indicator estimating the reach of publications to their addressees based on data on the consumption of a medium, (2) a sentiment index assessing the quality of the brand message in the media based on the share of positive, neutral and negative publications in the total message about the brand, and (3) total number of publications about the brand in the analysed period. Thus, it cannot be stated – as the authors of the ranking say – that it assesses the “strength” of brands, because the indicated measures are at most used to assess their “media power”, i.e. the effectiveness of reaching consumer awareness of messages about the brand in the media. However, taking into account a significant and growing role of the media, especially social networks, in creating social opinion as well as brand awareness, its image and, indirectly, brand loyalty, it should be emphasised that the assessment and position of the brand in this ranking should be taken into account by the brand administrator as important indicator to assess the effectiveness of the strategy for developing the brand capital and market power.

The latest edition of the Top Marka 2024 ranking was based on a survey that included over 1.4 million press texts, 11.9 million publications on web

portals, 18.2 million posts published on Facebook, Instagram, X and YouTube social networks, which were published between 1 July 2023 and 30 June 2024, which is not without significance for the results of the survey, because at that time the media focused primarily on the issues related to the elections to the Sejm and Senate, local governments and the European Parliament.

A specific methodology of this report and the period of implementation of the survey is reflected in its results, including the strong position of brands from the media market, in the overall ranking, the Onet (web portal) brand was rated first just as last year, WP (web portal) – second, gazeta.pl (web portal) – fourth, 5th – TVN (television) – fifth, Polsat (television) – sixth.

The results of the Top Marka 2024 survey confirmed a significant media power of the SGH brand, especially among Polish universities, as for another consecutive year the SGH Warsaw School of Economics was rated 3rd in the sectoral ranking of “Universities”, just behind the brands of the two largest Polish universities, i.e. the University of Warsaw (first) and the Jagiellonian University (second), and ahead of the brands of much larger scientific institutions than SGH such as the Warsaw University of Technology (fourth) and Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań (fifth). It should be noted that in the overall ranking of 500 Polish brands in 2024, SGH was rated significantly better – 65th compared to the results in the 2023 ranking (110th), with the ratings of individual media measures for the SGH brand for 2024 as follows: impact index – 499,833,945, sentiment index – 2.01 and total number of publications – 42,063.

These data also confirm an intense media activity of the SGH Warsaw School of Economics aimed at strengthening the capital and strength of the university brand. 

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SGH



↑ The basic components of the SGH branding are the basic logo and the extended logo (the acronym SGH and the full name).

In official situations, the Rector and the highest authorities of the university use the emblem. When creating it, the rich heritage of the university was kept in mind. The inspiration was the historical coat of arms, original seals and customarily used lettering.

Both logos and the emblem are registered Community Trademarks and have legal protection in the European Union.

Prospects for development of Polish economy – OECD report

 PIOTR MASZCZYK, MACIEJ CYGLER

The presentation of the OECD report entitled “POLAND 2025” took place on 4 February 2025. This event seems to have been so important, I mean the report itself as well as the seminar organised on the occasion of its publication at the SGH Warsaw School of Economics, that it is worth formulating **the most important conclusions about the Polish economy** and the prospects for its development in the short, medium and long term.



It is a truism to say that the second decade of the 21st century was an unprecedented period in the modern history of Poland. The average annual real economic growth rate in our country in the years 2009–2014 (i.e. at the time when the global economy was struggling with the global financial crisis) reached 2.9%; and in the years 2015–2019 as much as 4.5%. It is primarily thanks to this decade that Poland managed to significantly reduce the development gap, measured by the ratio of Polish GDP per capita calculated in accordance with purchasing power parity (PSN) in relation to the EU average, by more than 30 percentage points (in 2004 it was only 50.1% of the EU average, while at the end of 2023 it was already 80.2% of the EU average). Such a fast growth rate of the Polish economy in relation

to the EU average allows some economists from the Czech Republic and Hungary to formulate theses about the “Polish economic miracle” (an author of this text heard such statements made during a scientific seminar in Budapest), which occurred in 2010–2020. And although we were far from the growth rate characteristic of the post-war economy of the Federal Republic of Germany (according to the data provided by Norman Davies, in the years 1948–1963 the average annual GDP growth in West Germany came up to 7.6%), it is hard not to notice the impressive growth dynamics characteristic of Poland after the accession of our country to the European Communities (for comparison, the average – population-weighted – economic growth rate for 11 post-socialist countries, which joined the EU, was between 2004 and 2023 above half a percentage point, lower than that recorded in Poland and amounted to 3.2%).

However, the question arises as to how this impressive dynamics can be sustained in the medium and long term. Is it really the only probable scenario, outlined in a recent press interview given by Minister of Finance Andrzej Domański, in which Poland will “catch up” with the EU average before 2035, i.e. we will reach the average level of GDP per capita in the EU according to the PSN and we will ceaselessly continue to grow, up to the values characteristic of our western neighbour. Or rather, on the contrary, we must accept the fact that, as one of the Bible books picturesquely puts it, “(after the fat years) there shall come seven years of famine, and they shall forget that there was great abundance in the land of Egypt, and the famine shall consume the earth” (Genesis 41:30). An attempt to answer this question is extremely difficult, not only because, according to the words attributed to the Danish physicist Niels Bohr – “making predictions is difficult, especially if they concern the future”, but above all because of the subject matter such predictions are related to. A physicist has the comfort of being able to authoritatively state that a metal ball subjected to high temperature will increase its volume. This is an effect independent of what the ball might think about it, as well as of the attitude of the experimenter himself. It is different with economic

phenomena. Sometimes, the very formulation of a forecast affects economic entities in such a way that the probability of its materialisation decreases rapidly. On the other hand, inflationary phenomena are very often referred to as a self-fulfilling prophecy (although the impact of inflation expectations on the dynamics of price growth is, of course, a much more complicated phenomenon). In fact, forecasts are very often formulated precisely to prevent the worst scenario indicated in them from materialising. They are intended, through their alarmist tone, to trigger a change in, for example, economic policy in such a way as to avoid the threats described in the forecast. In addition, the impact of external conditions on the probability of a specific path of events occurring in a specific country is extremely high in the world described by economics, even crucial. A mission impossible award should be given to those who, already after Donald Trump had won the presidential election in the USA, were able to outline the scenario we are witnessing today. And to those who can predict what world order that will emerge after the end of the armed conflict in Ukraine may eventually be like. Will there be a customs war between the EU and the United States? What position will China take in this dispute? All these questions, which cannot be explicitly answered at the moment, concern the conditions which will have a decisive impact on the economic growth rate in Poland over the next 5–10 years.

However, it would be wrong to conclude that in connection with the relationships outlined above, it is not worth formulating any forecasts as it is impossible to predict the course of changes in the economy in a horizon longer than one or two years. On the contrary, although it is impossible to determine the rate of economic growth in Poland in 2030, it is necessary to point to the factors reducing the long-term rate of economic growth in Poland, the removal of which will help increase the probability of materialisation of the scenario outlined by Minister Domański or the scientific team whose proud member is one of the authors of this text. So, what is the biggest obstacle to maintaining or even increasing the dynamics of economic growth in Poland in the short, medium and long term?

The answer to this question is relatively simple on the one hand, and extremely difficult on the other (if we expect the answer to be transformed into a feasible political programme). Simple because economists generally agree that in the short term the most important thing is to maintain a sufficiently restrictive monetary policy by the central bank, which will allow to reduce the inflation rate relatively quickly to the level determined by the inflation target), and on the other hand, fiscal consolidation, which can reduce the size of the deficit of the public finance sector, which, both in nominal and real terms, remains at a historically high level in Poland. These were the conclusions of the OECD

report cited at the beginning. The economists responsible for its preparation point to the need to rethink the rules for granting transfers to households with children (to put it bluntly, they postulate the introduction of a property criterion under the “Family 800+” and “Active Parent” programmes), to consider an increase in taxes imposed on real estate and those related to the emission of environmentally harmful substances, as well as to gradually shift the retirement age women, so as to bring it relatively quickly up to the limit set for men. Having read this, it is easy to understand why, although these recipes seem quite obvious, their implementation may simply turn out to be impossible. Or at least impossible until there is a crisis in Poland that will question the current path of development, which can be reduced to a catchy slogan promoted by the current ruling coalition during the election campaign – and as one can think supported by candidate Rafał Trzaskowski during the presidential campaign – “nothing that has been given will be taken away”.

And here we come to the heart of the problems affecting the Polish economy. Well, the possibilities of shaping economic policy are a function of the patchwork model of capitalism, i.e. the institutional architecture (institutional order) existing in Poland and in other post-socialist countries which joined the EU. It is made up of three dimensions:

- the rules of conduct in force in society, i.e. codified laws (formal institutions) and dominant patterns of values and norms of behaviour of economic and social entities (informal institutions),
- the attitude of these entities to the existing rules, i.e. the degree of acceptance of existing formal and informal institutions or, on the contrary, the degree of involvement in activities aimed at changing them,
- the way in which existing formal rules are enforced.

The assessment of how the model of capitalism is able to generate a competitive advantage, understood, in a certain simplification, as the ability to achieve stable and sustainable economic growth translating into increased standard of living of citizens and their internal and external security, is based in the medium and long term primarily on its “responsiveness” (the ability to adapt to changing conditions of development, especially to cope with the growing multi-crisis), the ability to “anticipate” development opportunities, as well as the ability the system to learn and self-correct (institutional memory). The Polish model of capitalism unfortunately fails to cope with any of these three dimensions, which means that it is in fact incapable of initiating changes in the pattern of development, including changes to the existing model of international specialisation and of improving competitiveness (e.g. by increasing the innovation capacity), and avoiding the middle income trap and the transition from the (semi)periphery to the centre.

Thus, using the Solow–Swan model (exogenous growth model) as a kind of signpost (by the way, the use of endogenous models will not fundamentally change anything here), one of the most important challenges that the Polish economy must cope with in the medium and long term is demographic issues. The fertility rate in 2024 in our country was 1.12, which means the lowest value in the modern history of Poland (next to Spain, it is the worst result in the EU). To make matters worse, it seems that we are inevitably heading towards the countries of South-East Asia (South Korea, Singapore, Thailand or Vietnam), where the value of this indicator is below unity (in order to maintain the replacement of generations, it would have to be at the level of about 2.1). And although everyone is aware of this, this issue has not become a subject of debate in our country. Indeed, there are many reasons for this state of affairs, and the most important challenge is not supposed so much to reverse but to stop cultural changes (informal institutions!), which, according to demographers, may be the most important factor behind the decline in fertility in the long term. Nevertheless, the demographic situation of Poland could improve if, on the one hand, we implemented an active labour market policy, activating people who remain outside the workforce and reducing the rate of decline in the number of economically active people, e.g. by extending the period of women's professional activity up to the age of 65), and on the other hand, if we implemented a programme encouraging foreigners to come to Poland (similar to the American or Australian visa lottery). Is there anything moving on in these areas? Indeed, we are discussing the shortening of the period of men's professional activity (the “reversed” equalisation of the retirement age for women and men, which was mentioned by Minister Agnieszka Dziemianowicz-Bąk), a general reduction in working time and the complete closure of borders to migration, the victim of which is, for example, the SGH Warsaw School of Economics, which encounters a decreasing stream of foreign students who would like to study at our University. So, the solutions that are completely counterproductive to those required by the Polish economy. Everything, of course, in the name of winning the next election, because from the point of view of politicians, this is the only thing that matters,

Following the conclusions formulated on the basis of this growth model, let's move on from the rate of demographic growth to the increases in **PRODUCTIVITY** driven mostly by technological progress i.e. to the issue of innovation of the Polish economy. Although it is hard to believe, it is even worse in this area. The basis for assessing the ability to initiate changes in the Polish model of capitalism may boils down to four indicators used for the purposes of the *European Innovation Scoreboard*, which show the share of expenditure on research

and development in GDP both in total and broken down into the public and enterprise sectors, as well as the share of direct expenditure and tax support in this sphere in the total expenditure of the public sector. On the other hand, the results of the activities of the institutions constituting the patchwork model of capitalism in Poland, creating premises for changing the current pattern of international specialisation and improving competitiveness through the increased capacity to innovate, can be assessed using four indicators taken from the same source. They illustrate, respectively: the relative (in relation to GDP) number of patents filed with the European Patent Office (EPO), the number of new technologies in the area of environmental protection in relation to all technologies developed in the country, the share of goods that carry the most modern technologies in exports and the relation of exports of knowledge-based services to the total exports of services. Even against the background of average values in the EU (which, let's admit, is not the leader of technological change), Poland remains one of those countries where the situation looked particularly unfavourable, also compared to other representatives of the patchwork model or also the Mediterranean model countries that are lagging behind the average.

In the OECD report *POLAND 2025*, referred to at the beginning, climate policy occupies a significant place, to which one of the four main chapters of this study is devoted, using the term “green transformation” in its title. At this point, we do not question the need for action in this area, which has been credibly justified by scientific evidence clearly indicating that by reducing the scale of global warming, we have a chance – as a global community – to avoid or reduce its negative effects, also in terms of costs (which was comprehensively presented almost 20 years ago in the pioneering Stern Report *The Economics of Climate Change*, as well as in many later studies). This evidence also indicates that the need for action is becoming more and more urgent, hence it is difficult to disagree with the recommendations of the authors of the OECD report that Poland should intensify and accelerate activities in this area. It is worth adding, however, that such a recommendation is in a sense universal and could be included in reports for most countries, not only those associated in the OECD (by the way, such a conclusion can also be drawn on the basis of the data presented in the report).

It seems that the stereotype of perceiving Poland as a significant emitter of greenhouse gases from a high-emission economy should already be somewhat verified. It should be recalled that Poland – with one of the highest share of fossil fuels (mainly hard coal and lignite) in the energy mix in the EU – had one of the most demanding starting levels in the implementation of the decarbonisation policy, and as a consequence must face the


most far-reaching expectations in the context of the Community's joint effort and the growing level of ambition in this area. At this point, the logic and meaning of the principle of "common but differentiated responsibility" adopted in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change can be recalled, which is also practically applicable in the division of efforts in the EU, hence the simple translation of ambitious EU goals of reducing emissions, increasing the share of renewable energy sources or improving energy efficiency into the national level – as it was put in the OECD report – seems unjustified.

Let us then try to complete the picture outlined in the OECD report. In the period from 1990 to 2023, Poland managed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from domestic sources by approx. 40%, while real GDP (in constant prices) increased by more than 250%, which shows the effect of a kind of decoupling, i.e. breaking the correlation between economic growth and greenhouse gas emissions. Part of this effect is a gradual but consistent phasing out of coal, whose share in electricity generation has decreased from over 90% in 2000 to just over 50% in 2024 (at the same time, the share of renewable sources is already close to 30%).

It is also worth paying attention to the type of indicators we use to measure and communicate these changes. One of the most commonly used measures of the emission intensity of economies is to show the emissions from the territory of a given country per capita. In this approach, Poland, with an indicator of $8.9 \text{ tCO}_{2\text{eq}}$ per capita does not compare favourably with the EU average of $5.96 \text{ tCO}_{2\text{eq}}$ per capita. However, this indicator does not illustrate the true level of emissions for which we are responsible, as it does not take into account the emissions that we "import". This real level of responsibility is better expressed by the emission rate estimated on the basis of consumption or production (consumption/production based emission), commonly known as the carbon footprint, and in this case we do not differ significantly from the EU average: $10.79 \text{ tCO}_{2\text{eq}}$ per capita for Poland and $10.65 \text{ tCO}_{2\text{eq}}$ per capita in the EU. It is worth noting that when taking into account international flows, including "hidden" flows of emissions embedded in imported goods, the EU's share of global warming responsibility is slightly higher than measured by traditional indicators.

Of course, the data and comparisons presented above cannot justify calls for a reduction in decarbonisation efforts at both EU and national level. As an EU member state, Poland is a co-author of the Community decarbonisation policy, including its ambitious targets, such as a 55% reduction in emissions in 2030 or net climate neutrality in the mid-21st century, and is aware of the scale of the effort, including the costs. Negotiations and disputes should be more about implementation details and ironing out the imperfections of solutions rather

than changing fundamental decisions. Even Mario Draghi's report, often cited by opponents of the ambitious climate policy, which notes the growing investment gap between the EU and the US and postulates the need for more effective stimulation of economic growth, points to action in three areas: the development of innovative solutions on the basis of mature technologies, investments in security and Europe's lower dependence on global partners and linking the development of European industry with the achievement of climate goals. The notion that moving away from an ambitious climate policy as a way to improve the EU's global competitiveness also seems misplaced in the context of the latest reports from China – currently the largest emitter of greenhouse gases – which has announced that it intends to peak emissions within the next decade and achieve climate neutrality by 2060. It has been the world's largest investor in renewable energy for more than a decade, outstripping all other countries in the rankings. It seems, then, that China is following a path similar to that set out in the European Union, confirming that this green transformation is not only a way to avoid negative environmental impacts but also a way to stimulate growth and strengthen its competitive position not only in the long term.

The aforementioned conditions confirm the hypothesis that, in the context of patchwork capitalism, there is a kind of "institutional short-sightedness syndrome", which means a preference for relatively easy to achieve short- and medium-term goals (quantitative changes) at the expense of long-term goals (qualitative changes). Without overcoming this extremely dangerous phenomenon, it will be impossible to achieve long-term goals such as changing the (semi-) peripheral status of Poland, understood as being permanently stuck at the intermediate stages of global value creation chains, increasing the share of products carrying the latest technologies in GDP and exports, as well as limiting the negative effects of demographic change through a reasonable migration policy, active labour market policy and productivity growth through reforms of the education system and knowledge creation. Obviously, these goals are absolutely crucial from the point of view of our country's ability to avoid the trap of medium development and maintain a high rate of economic growth in the long term. 

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¹ Carbon dioxide equivalent, i.e. the conversion of emissions of greenhouse gases other than CO₂ and expressing them with a single measure.

The prospects for Ukraine

MAŁGORZATA MOŁĘDA-ZDZIECH, IRYNA DEGTYAROVA

After 20 years of membership in the European Union, it is an important challenge to discuss the issue of Polish membership in the EU with representatives of Generation Z. According to the results of research (e.g. CBOS, 2024), it is the young people who do not have this kind of knowledge; they take the membership for granted because they were born or raised after 2004. One of the challenges to tackle in the near future is how to end the war in Ukraine and how enlarge the EU by this country and the Western Balkans. Poland understands the importance of these challenges and its role is to raise people's awareness and constantly remind them that the eastern border of Poland is the eastern border of the European Union and the ongoing war in Ukraine is a war in Europe.

For Ukraine, following the path of European integration is a strategic civilisational choice defined in the constitution in 2019 and supported by 90% of Ukrainians¹. The role of the young generation in this choice was crucial, because it was the protest of student youth and the so-called Euromaidan that began the Revolution of Dignity, which initiated Ukraine's departure from the pro-Russian course in favour of a decisively pro-Western direction. The Russian aggression in 2014 is a reaction to this choice, and a full-scale war is the price that Ukraine is paying for taking a pro-EU course. After a quick application (28 February 2022) and granting EU candidate status (23 June 2022), the European Council decided to open negotiations with Ukraine on 14 December 2023, and negotiations officially began on 25 June 2024. The dynamics of integration processes must be supported by intensive activities aimed at preparing negotiation teams, educating staff, improving competences and knowledge of the operation of European institutions, and active cooperation with European partners with regard to their accession experience. And this was the focus of the study visit to Brussels, organised by the Rector's Representative for Cooperation with Ukrainian Universities, Doctor Iryna Degtyarova and the Rector's



Representative for European Union Affairs, Habilitated Doctor Małgorzata Mołęda-Zdziech, Professor at SGH.

The aim of this visit was to learn about the operation of the "European Bubble", as the institutional labyrinth in Brussels is often called. The moment was extremely interesting for several reasons. First, it was in December 2024 that the institutions started working in a new institutional cycle and in a new composition. Ursula von der Leyen took the helm of the European Commission for the second time. After the June elections to the European Parliament, a new composition of this institution was formed, with right-wing populist forces strengthened.

Second, on 1 January 2024, Poland took over the rotating six-month presidency of the Council of the EU. It is worth remembering that one of its priorities is external security, including, besides the development of military infrastructure, the continuation of comprehensive support for Ukraine, struggling against the Russian aggression. Poland will seek the EU military assistance to Ukraine, its stable, long-term financing, as well as the EU participation in Ukraine's recovery. A stable neighbourhood is a prerequisite for the European security. Therefore, the enlargement of the Union to include countries that share the EU values is a geopolitical priority.

It should also be remembered that accession negotiations are a long process as many conditions should be met. Apart from the political level, which we have no impact on, or it may at most be moderate, the scientific community should get prepared for the accession. They may already be present in the EU forum, participating in the work of associations such as the European University Association (EUA), they may be active in the European Research Area. The significance of European cooperation and the need for greater involvement of universities in preparing Ukraine for accession was emphasised by Oksana Diakun, Deputy Ambassador of the Mission of Ukraine to the EU. Ukrainian universities, in cooperation with Polish and European partners, should be able to meet the growing demand for specialists in European integration.

"One of the most important conclusions is a clear understanding of European support for Ukraine. At the same time, it is clear that reforms are necessary for integration. To this end, Ukraine needs to have many specialists in various fields with

a new way of thinking, as well as to understand the values, principles and approach of the European Union. The implementation of European values and principles in education is crucial for the further preparation of specialists,” said Halyna Makhova from the Kyiv School of Economics (KSE).

“The study visit to Brussels provided us with valuable information about the European integration process and its implications for Ukraine. The integration process is a dynamic and complex interaction of different actors, each pursuing their own interests. In the coming years, the EU is expected to undergo significant changes in its priorities, making Ukraine’s active participation in this process crucial. By seizing the opportunities offered by integration and learning from the experience of other member states and social groups, Ukraine can improve its strategic position and overall development. The visit also highlighted great opportunities available in the European area of education and research to be fully used by Ukrainian universities, educators, researchers and students,” pointed out Petro Baikovsky from the Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU).

From the point of view of the conducted activities but also from the point of view of representing civil society, it was important to visit the Economic and Social Committee. Andris Gobins from Latvia talked about initiatives to support Ukraine at the EU level. We emphasise this fact because common history and experience (the historical past within the Soviet Union) are the best guarantee of understanding the current situation of Ukraine, but above all the threat posed by Russia, which wants to maintain its imperial influence in the region.

“An essential role and opportunities of young people in the EU are understood as a project for democratic development. The long-term process of EU policies and youth involvement in them is an important goal, as the nature of policies as well as youth engagement will directly affect their future,” noted Olga Stasiv, a UCU student.

The experience of the visit to Brussels changes the perspective, as the participants themselves said, and makes anti-European groups that like dazzling with the formula that Brussels “imposes” or “orders” us to do something. On entering the EU labyrinth of institutions, we can see the rationalisation of the decision-making process, its planning, transparency, with clearly defined moments of consultation with stakeholders, and as a result – opportunities to participate in this process. Evidence-based policy and science-based policy are the rules that govern this process. Therefore, universities should change and expand the education about the European Union and Europe in such a way as to prepare experts necessary in the integration process on the one hand, and on the other hand, equip a wider community with knowledge and shape the European attitudes of citizens, especially the young ones. Thus, the visit will have a great impact on teaching at Ukrainian universities.

“My participation in the study visit will allow me to strengthen the European dimension in the academic disciplines taught at the Vadim Hetman Kyiv National Economic University (KNEU) to students specialising in public management and administration, in particular in disciplines for undergraduate and graduate students such as European integration and EU standards, social technologies in public administration, economic policy and public finance management and strategy and change management, as well as in the final workshop for building professional competences in public management and administration,” said Nataliya Fedirko from the KNEU.


“The experience gained during the trip will be directly implemented at the National University of the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy (NaUKMA) in the curriculum, including public administration. In the next academic year, we also plan to change the curriculum for law students towards the implementation of EU law,” announced Volodymyr Venher from NaUKMA.

“The role of universities is to train professionals who will participate in reforms to rebuild the country after the end of hostilities, to engage young people and broad segments of society, to carry out a teaching mission, to organise training for community representatives in project management in order to effectively exploit the opportunities of EU financial support. (...) The coming years may become a time of transformation of curricula and the creation of new study programmes. Supporting and developing leadership competences at various levels in the management system of higher education institutions is also essential,” emphasised Svitlana Zhiltsova from the Vasyl Stus Donetsk National University (DonNU).

Direct contacts in Brussels enable breaking stereotypes and building a network for the development of international cooperation between Ukrainian universities, SGH and the CIVICA Alliance:

“As the coordinator of international cooperation in the KSE, I believe that the participation in the visit will have a direct impact on new partnerships and projects under the EU programmes. In addition, a number of new ideas were generated during the visit, including the launch of the Euroclub in the KSE, strengthening cooperation within the CIVICA alliance, writing projects on mobility and capacity building” pointed out Kostyantyn Kyrychenko from the KSE.

In conclusion, the immersion in the “European Bubble” in Brussels showed that Ukrainian universities can and should become leaders in the process of European transformation in cooperation with partners and alliances of European universities. Because it is alliances that are called the beacons of European values and the European way of living. Ukrainian universities show the society a clear example of how to implement various projects in the country, how to promote European principles and change the approach, how to use the partnership opportunities in the EU. Universities are also responsible for shaping future generations in the spirit of democratic society and attitudes of civic responsibility, which directly translate into the functioning of EU institutions. Due to the growing demand for specialists in European integration, Ukrainian universities, supported by partners, should intensify their activities for staff training and youth involvement.

It has been known for years that the most effective channels of influence are direct contacts. Therefore, due to conversations we are able to break stereotypes, ask about doubtful issues or verify information provided by the media or politicians, who are not always impartial. Only direct visits can build a feeling and conviction that we are in a common Europe, that Europe is ours. The direction Europe is heading for also depends on us. 


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¹ <https://eu-ua.kmu.gov.ua/news/90-ukrayintsiv-hochut-shhob-do-2030-roku-ukrayina-pryydenalas-do-yes-opytuvannya/>



PHOTO: ORGANISERS OF THE EVENT

The road to Ukraine's European future

 JAKUB MIRKOWSKI, MONIKA WRONA
DANYLO ZVARYCH

On 8-15 December 2024, Ukrainian researchers and students visited the European Union institutions in Brussels as part of a study visit aimed at familiarising them with the principles of operation and key decision-making mechanisms in the EU as well as cooperation with Ukraine in the context of the EU integration.

The participants were able to visit the European Commission, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee, several key directorates and other European policy-making bodies.

INTENSIVE PROGRAMME

The study visit began at the European Commission Visitors' Centre. The programme began with a presentation entitled *Shaping the Future of Europe: The Work of the European Commission*, delivered by Petr Mooz, Senior Expert at the Directorate-General for Budget (BUDG) and representative of the Directorate-General for Communication. The meeting outlined the structure and operation of the European Commission and its key tasks in the EU decision-making process.

It was followed by a discussion on international coordination of crisis response, humanitarian protection and crisis management in the EU. A lecture on this topic was delivered by Nadiya Vertebna, a specialist in international relations from the Foreign Policy Instruments Service (FPI). The session devoted to the activities of the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) presented the activities related to the EU budget and fight against corruption. A presentation on the EU economic and trade relations with Ukraine was given by Fredrik Beckvid Tranchell, Policy Coordinator for Ukraine at the Directorate-General for Trade (DG TRADE). The day ended with a visit to the House of European History, where participants learned about the social, political and cultural history of Europe.

The next day began with a visit to the House of Eastern Poland in Brussels, where the discussed topics referred to the representation of Polish regions in European institutions. The key point on the agenda was the meeting with Jochen M. Richter, Chairman of the Global Security Forum, who presented international security issues. Then, the participants visited the Directorate-General for Education and Culture, where the role of education and culture was discussed in view of international cooperation development.

On the third day, there was a visit to the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR), where we discussed the issue of the EU policy towards neighbouring countries and the integration process and cooperation with Ukraine, in particular under the Ukraine Facility programme. A Ukrainian group of participants, together with the SGH representatives, visited the Mission of Ukraine to the European Union, where talks were held in Ukrainian on further strengthening of mutual relations.

The fourth day of the visit began with a meeting with political advisors to MEP Marie Toussaint on the Environmental Crime Directive. Then, the group visited the headquarters of Business and Science Poland, an organisation whose activities focus on supporting Polish entrepreneurs and scientists in the European arena. The next item on the agenda was a visit to the Directorate-General for Research and Innovation (DG RTD), where discussions were held on the development of science, research and innovation in Europe and cooperation with Ukraine, with emphasis the importance of science for the future of European integration.

On the last day, the participants visited the European Parliament, including the Parliamentarium – an interactive centre presenting the history and operation of the EP.

PARTICIPANTS' OPINIONS

The participants of the study visit emphasised that it was not only an opportunity for them to expand their knowledge of the operation of EU institutions but also an inspiration for further activity for international cooperation and building relations between Ukraine and the European Union. The atmosphere of meetings and talks was extremely open, conducive to the exchange of views. The participants could ask questions. In conversations with experts, they drew attention to the issues such as increasing the attractiveness of Ukrainian universities for future students, prospects for closer cooperation between universities and the Ukrainian government and the possibilities of integrating Ukrainian academic institutions with their European counterparts.

Kostyantyn Kyrychenko, KSE Vice Rector for International Cooperation said, “We are looking forward to new projects with our European partners on topics currently challenging for Ukraine, including urban development and digital democracy. (...) We are also thinking about projects which will enhance Ukraine's contribution to the European project.”

Svitlana Zhiltsova, institutional coordinator of the “CIVICA for Ukraine” project at the Vasyl Stus Donetsk National University (DonNU) said, “It was an opportunity for all participants to see Ukraine's future – a future in which our country becomes a full member of the European community. It is a motivation to do our best to become part of the EU.”

The knowledge acquired in Brussels is a valuable tool for the participants in their further professional, scientific and social activities. Many of them plan to use this experience to strengthen relations between Ukraine and European institutions and promote the idea of Ukraine's integration with the EU.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE VISIT FOR SGH AND CIVICA

The study visit to Brussels was an important step in SGH efforts to strengthen international cooperation and support European integration. As the coordinator of project “SGH and CIVICA for Ukraine”, SGH confirmed its commitment to building bridges between the academic communities of Europe and Ukraine. The trip also had a symbolic dimension, showing European solidarity and the value of cooperation in building peace and unity. The participants were able to expand their knowledge of European compromise, decision-making processes and the importance of active participation in the political and social life of the EU. Strengthening ties between Ukrainian universities and European institutions is an extremely important element of this process, a step towards Ukraine's future integration with the EU.

The visit was organised by Dr. Iryna Degtyarova and Prof. Małgorzata Molęda-Zdziech, as part of the project “SGH and CIVICA for the European Future of Ukraine”, financed by the Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange (NAWA) under the “Solidarity with Ukraine – European Universities” programme.

The Ukrainian community was represented by five partner universities of SGH and CIVICA: Vadym Hetman Kyiv National Economic University (KNEU), Vasyl Stus Donetsk National University (DonNU), Ukrainian Catholic University (UKU), National University Kyiv-Mohyla Academy (NaUKMA) and Kyiv School of Economics (KSE). The visit was also attended by representatives of the SGH student community, representing the Student EU Association and the Student Association for Ukraine' Recovery. 

JAKUB MIRKOWSKI, President of the SGH European Union Society

MONIKA WRONA, Vice President of the SGH European Union Society

DANYLO ZVARYCH, President of the SGH Student Association for Ukraine'

Recovery



Endless adventure



ANNA SYDORCZAK



ALEKSANDER JURA

An interview with Aleksander Jura, a graduate of the SGH Warsaw School of Economics and the winner of the first prize for the photo “School Bus” in the category of Ecology and Climate Change at the 20th Great Photo Competition of the magazine *National Geographic Polska*.

Anna Sydorczak: After studying quantitative methods in economics and information systems, you became a photographer. What inspired you to start this adventure and how has your passion developed over the years?

Aleksander Jura: I have always been interested in photography, even before I started studying at university. I take photos mainly for myself, it's my hobby. I've always been an ambitious person and I've always wanted to be the best at what I do. Photography is a passion in which I can combine all my other passions. A few months before coming to university, I started to pay more attention to photography, which with the passage of time and the development of skills turned into paid work. At this point, I make a living from photography.

You have recently won a *National Geographic Polska* competition, which was a kind of seal on what you do. Tell our readers how this winning photo was created as the frame shows us a fairly non-standard shot.

I've been thinking about shooting wildlife for a long time, but first I had to save up money for a better lens. It took me a while and by the end of 2023 I could afford this sort of purchase. I'd already had some experience in photography, I was doing quite well achieving my first successes. I'm open-minded, I like working with people, and it's interesting because photographers are usually introverted and closed. And I really like working with both introverts and extroverts. I know that extroversion opens up introverts a bit and allows them to maintain such a nice balance, so I started to feel a little like a fish in water. In addition to other smaller projects I had, in the spring of 2024 I received information from a friend who works as a gardener in the Royal Łazienki Park and, like me, is a great enthusiast of photography, that the so-called merganser crossings are taking place in the area. In spring, the hatching season of these birds begins. They swim through all the canals from the Łazienki area to the Vistula. In order to prolong the species, mergansers have to cross two roads: Czerniakowska and Łazienkowska streets near the Legia stadium. I was really intrigued, I hadn't come across this phenomenon before. Later, it turned out that it was a small Warsaw classic event. When you are driving along Czerniakowska Street, you can even notice special warning signs with symbolic drawings of mergansers. So I started my “hunt” for the right frame and before work, every second day, I came to the Łazienki area to look for the perfect one. I spent a lot of time following the scheme. One Sunday, I came into conclusion that I would not take pictures of mergansers, which were afraid of crowds and usually did not show up on the route. However, on that day, while browsing the Internet,



I saw someone's photos of the merganser crossing Czerniakowska Street. I was really disappointed. But I found out that there are several more such pairs of mergansers in Łazienki park. I spent the next mornings in the park, where I came every day and tried to capture the moment of the birds' crossing. I also met people from the Greenery Board of the capital city of Warsaw, who are involved in the organisation of volunteering aimed at safely guiding mergansers across Wisłostrada. Being there again, one morning I noticed that a pair of mergansers were swimming in one of the ponds and I informed the volunteers about it. We walked with one of them along the aforementioned route. It took us about five hours and it is from this "trip" that my winning photo comes from. Later, I attended three other crossings, one of which lasted two days.

Where do your passion and love for photography come from?

The passion comes from the fact that it is a simple, pleasant, and at the same time satisfying type of art combined with physics and science. Photography has been something technical for me since the beginning. I was most interested in how light behaves, but also the camera itself as a research tool that collects measurements in the form of an image recorded on the matrix. You can just go outside, to some wild place and always have your camera with you, take a picture and then edit it at home, so it's a very pleasant form of art. On the other hand, it is a fairly simple activity that does not require very much energy and time. I usually meet classical music or dance artists, theatre actors – they practice non-stop, sometimes even from the age of five, and devote time to being the best. And photography is very accessible today and does not require such sacrifices. The only "entry threshold" is the purchase of

✦ The awarded photo "School bus". Mergansers leading their young across Wisłostrada. Warsaw 2024

✦ Jacek Patrzykont, a legend of Polish climbing instructors at the top of the Enis rock. Rudawy 2024

equipment and learning how to use it. In my opinion, every person who would like to learn photography is able to acquire this knowledge. However, it seems to me that in wildlife photography you have to be very well organised and plan the whole process of taking photos. For example, recently I took up photographing the sky. First, you have to choose the right days – the moon must be new. In Poland, the centre of the Milky Way is seen only in specific months and in a specific place, so the so-called lunar window appears first, then the Milky Way window. We may have a plan for the session and a set date when the sky is supposed to be cloudless, suddenly one small cloud may appear and spoil the whole project. I've been going to the Dolomites in





December for 15 years and I have a habit of staying overnight on the slope just to take a photo of the sky at night. I've always had a lunar window for five years. But when the moon was new, I had only one cloudless night left to take such a photo.

You are self-taught in the field of photography. What were your biggest challenges during your studies and how did you face them?

To be honest, in the process of taking photos and developing them, I did not encounter any real problems. This is a process that I followed in harmony with myself, I also gave myself a lot of space for possible mistakes, I learned step by step. My intuition helped me most in this approach, as well as the people around me who evaluated my work and sometimes also criticised it. Thanks to their advice and comments, I developed my own style. As for the challenges, I think that the main problem, not only for me, but for most photographers, is the evaluation of their own work. No university will teach that, everyone has to approach it individually. This is probably the most stressful stage, when you are interested in the project itself, you already have an idea for it, and the client asks you how much it will cost. For me personally, this is the moment when I could answer that I will do it for free, but I can't,

† Natalia Nadolna, a model.
Warsaw 2022

because it is the source of my income. On the other hand, I don't want to put the client off. Another problem is competition. There are many good photographers on the market, including professionals convinced of their uniqueness. And the truth is that there are no extraordinary people in photography. Because it's so accessible now, and so many people, not only professionals, can capture truly unique moments, the field is becoming very common.

Let's come back to your winning photo. You have already said that nature photography is your true passion. Why such a topic? How important is ecology or the environment to you?

Absolutely. It seems to me that many people now live in hypocrisy and because they do not have this contact with nature, they close themselves off in their views, for example, on climate change. Maybe if they started visiting new places, they would change their minds on this subject, they would get out of the so-called bambinism and see that it is not so beautiful and rosy, because the world is very brutal. I am convinced that contact with nature is beneficial for mental health. Of course, I won't encourage everyone to give up psychologists and go to the forest (laughter), but in my opinion, communing with nature and "getting tired" in its surroundings allows you to take a mental break from the modern rush. Many friends of mine or people of my age struggle with depression. I myself often have worse moments, but going out of town and being physically tired in nature make me rest. Man has not changed for 10,000 years, evolution is slow, but civilisation has moved forward a lot. Being surrounded by nature can calm you down and your head returns to the state of balance.

Let me ask you about your reflections on our university: how do you remember this period?

For me, the decision to study at SGH was the best choice in my life and I can't imagine studying elsewhere. This university gave me a chance to develop in terms of what I do now. SGH, by its very nature, forces you to go out to people, create projects and teaches you how to cooperate with others. When I left high school, I had no idea about my future, I didn't know really what I wanted to do. And our university just gave me some space, I didn't have to make this choice right away, and I had time to make a good decision. SGH also made me stop striving to receive the best grades, and I became more involved in student activities, in scientific societies. I was active in as many as eight student scientific societies. It suited me very well and gave me a sense that what I do is cool and valuable. A person who has graduated from the Warsaw School of Economics comes out with experience and I think that's what I liked most.



† A snow groomer working in the vicinity of Seceda. The photo taken at night spent at the summit. Dolomites 2023

During your studies, you were also associated with the editorial team of *Magiel*, an independent student monthly magazine.

As for *Magiel*, it was the first organisation I got involved in. I am still active there, I still try to create something for them. I also owe a lot to my friends from *Magiel*, after my return from volunteering in Vietnam, they gave me a mock-up of the cover of *National Geographic* with my photo. At that time, no one knew that I would get a real prize in a competition organised by this magazine. Special thanks are due to my friend Tomasz, who always believed in me and supported me, for which I am very grateful. He made me realise that what I was doing somehow fit very well with the style of *National Geographic*. Until the end, I did not believe that anything would come of it, let alone that I would get an award in the competition.

What are your plans for the future? Would you like to return to the corporation? Or maybe there are more photography projects waiting for you?

Right now, I'd like to focus on travelling. Creating new photos – it's really an endless adventure. I still have climbing and hiking plans, the next planned expedition is a trip to Kilimanjaro, and in February to Grossglockner – the highest peak in Austria. And when it comes to work, I would definitely like to have my own firm. Here, the inspiration comes from my Dad, who is an entrepreneur himself. I would like to combine photography with an application, something related to IT. And what

about returning to the corporation? There is such a chance, I do not close myself off to it. Working from home, I see that it can be combined with passion. The most important thing is to be happy, have an open mind and mental comfort in travelling and fulfilling yourself.

Finally: what tips and advice could you give to people who are just starting their adventure with photography?

It is definitely worth investing in used equipment to begin with. If they have a limited budget, they can confidently look for it on OLX. Used equipment is not worse than new, you can often save a lot and at the same time leave a door to give up photography, if it is not your cup of tea. On the other hand, beginners should think about buying and doing their research calmly. It is worth watching professionals and not being afraid of photo editing programmes. I am always happy to advise anybody on equipment. I myself cannot spend money impulsively, especially when it comes to spending, say, a thousand zlotys, I prefer to check all the options first and then choose the best one.

Thank you for your time and the interview. 📷

ANNA SYDORCZAK, former employee at Communication and Media Relations Team, SGH Rector's Office.

The strength of community – to connect generations for success

 JUSTYNA KOZERA

Can the academic community perform well and bring benefits when it focuses only on its members committed to the current student-teacher administrative duties and tasks?

Absolutely. However, there is a simple method to increase the opportunities and advantages of being its member. This method consists in an active and permanent expansion of the community by inviting graduates to it. The student-alumni community can play a significant role not only in academic life but also later in professional life.

By creating a bridge between current students and those who have already graduated, we aim to build an extensive network of support and cooperation. Thanks to it, it becomes possible not only to share knowledge and experience but also to build long-term relationships that can be helpful at different stages of professional life.

To implement this assumption, a number of integrating activities are needed such as meetings and events (e.g. seminars, workshops), mentoring programmes; nowadays online platforms and social media cannot be overestimated. Such



activities are also undertaken by SGH, including the Career and Alumni Relations Centre.

Currently, social media are an indispensable tool supporting the creation and sustaining of the student and graduate community. Therefore, in July 2024, we launched the SGH Alumni profile on LinkedIn, which has so far attracted over 2.6 thousand followers. We hope that as it develops, it will become a space for their active involvement as creators and inspirers of the content posted, not only as observers.

The events we organise as part of the SGH Alumni Club have been creating an opportunity to expand knowledge and networking for years. This combination is possible primarily during onsite meetings, which after the COVID-19 pandemic have become less frequent – in accordance with the preferences of graduates. However, when they do take place at SGH, they create a nice common space for students and graduates to facilitate networking. As was the case during the meeting co-organised with the Global Learning Community on April 16 (academic year 2023/24). During “Alumni Insights: Navigating Careers and Company Cultures”, the guests – international graduates of the SGH Warsaw School of Economics, who have been present on the labour market for several years – shared their experiences and practical tips on entering the labour market and moving on it efficiently in order to maximise professional development and satisfaction. The students participating in the meeting could not only listen to the tips of their older colleagues; some of them took the opportunity to ask for references, highlighting the practical benefits of such meetings. Silva Nazaryan, then a student at the Warsaw School of Economics and chairwoman of the GLC (Global Learning Community) Student Club, summed up: “The cooperation between GLC and the SGH Alumni Club was very successful, with the club’s unwavering support from start to finish. We are deeply grateful for your help in bringing

alumni and students together, fostering meaningful connections and enriching the experiences of everyone involved.”

There was a slightly different character of the meeting co-organised also as part of the SGH Alumni Club within the Student Marketing Society, on 5 March (academic year 2023/24) *LinkedIn (not) for students? Facts and Myths*. The expert-guest was Marcin Malec, an SGH graduate, who shared his practical knowledge in the field of building a personal brand on LinkedIn. His profile was followed by over 20 thousand people at that time and the content was displayed over 5.5 million times a year (data from the day of the meeting). He explained why it is worth taking care of a personal brand already during your studies, what to write about and focus on, and how the LinkedIn algorithm works. The subject of the meeting was so ininteresting that the students talked to the guest long after the official part ended. The meeting was followed by a short video course *Professional LinkedIn account. Foundations*, which Marcin prepared for students and young graduates.

On a larger scale, the task of bringing former and present students together, exchanging knowledge, building meaningful contacts and enriching the experience of the parties involved is carried out by the SGH Mentoring Programme. It not only provides the opportunity for individual work in the mentor (graduate) – mentee (student) pair but also creates opportunities for all participating students and alumni to meet during joint events. This is one of our flagship initiatives, which for years has brought many positive results everybody involved and the entire community. The eighth edition of the programme began in December 2024 with a record number of 149 mentoring pairs. We hope that, like in the previous editions, it will provide participants with valuable experience.


The opportunity for alumni and students to meet also occurs during substantive and networking events, which we want to organise more often. We are prompted to do so by really positive opinions of people participating in “AI in finance and management. New Year’s Networking Meeting” on 15 January 2025, which gathered over 100 people. It took place in the new building of the SGH Center for Innovative Space. The event was honoured by the presence of Rector Piotr Wachowiak and Vice Rector for Development Dorota Niedziółka. After the substantive part, they talked, reminisced, made new contacts and refreshed old acquaintances until late.

Encouraged by the success of the New Year’s event, on 10 March 2025, we organised another discussion and networking meeting under the motto: *Leaders – leadership without schemes*. Distinguished guests shared their experiences and thoughts during the panel moderated by Dorota Haller, Forbes Women Podcast Co-host

& Co-creator, Client Solutions Director RAS and SGH graduate. Most of them were, of course, SGH graduates as for example: Monika Brzózka – CFO, Board Member VML, Monika Jezierska – partner, Consulting, Risk & Compliance EY, Adrian Kaim – Vice-President of TFI mBank, Piotr Pajda – co-founder of Simpl.rent, Magdalena Proga-Stępień – Member of the Management Board of Santander Bank Polska S.A. and Łukasz Szymula – General Manager Poland & CEE.

An inspiring life story of two leaders living together as a married couple was shared by Barbara Mierzwińska – Vice President & Member of the Board at GdziePoLek and Maciej Mierzwiński – owner of CEE Energy Group. The topics discussed during the event caused intense discussions, which moved to the backstage zone. Ladies could also take advantage of image consultation in the formal fashion zone prepared by MB Marta Banaszek. Among the participants, there was a group of students and young graduates, and the whole meeting was conducive to establishing new contacts and refreshing relationships, gave space for conversations and exchange of opinions. We will certainly create more opportunities like this, and one of the most important of them will be the SGH Celebration in June, to which we always invite graduates.

What are the specific benefits of these activities? Students gain access to the knowledge and experience of graduates, as well as support in career planning. And graduates have the opportunity to maintain ties with the university and get closer to the young generation entering the market, where they will become their colleagues. Both parties are developing a network of professional contacts. Building relationships between the current students and graduates can lead to new career opportunities.

Building a community of students and graduates is an indispensable task in long-term thinking about the success of the University and its community. It benefits all stakeholders, and a supportive environment maximises the potential for professional and personal growth. The University creates space and stimulates the process, but it is the commitment of both students and alumni that allows them to fully benefit from this unique support. 

JUSTYNA KOZERA, Director of Career and Alumni Centre, SGH

Collaboration between academia and business

 PATRYCJA DUTKIEWICZ



A dynamically changing economy and increasing labour market demands mean that the traditional academic education model is not always sufficient to prepare students for professional challenges. For years, the SGH Warsaw School of Economics has emphasised a practical approach to teaching, fostered by close collaboration with the business sector. This is the main idea behind the SGH Partners Club, where companies contribute to the curriculum by offering joint classes, lectures and case studies. This partnership makes education at SGH even more effective and tailored to the real market needs.

The collaboration between academia and businesses takes many forms, from inviting experts from renowned companies to deliver lectures to organising workshops to student participation in real business projects and company visits. A great example to quote is courses conducted in partnership with companies, where students analyse real business cases and specialised thematic modules are led by business professionals. Instead of focusing solely on theoretical considerations, students face authentic challenges that businesses encounter daily. This approach not only makes learning more engaging but also develops analytical and strategic skills, which are essential in today's job market.

LEARNING THROUGH SOLVING REAL-WORLD PROBLEMS

Many companies collaborating with SGH provide students with real business problems to solve. This partnership is well exemplified by the banking and consulting sectors, where students analyse topics such as the development strategy for digital

banking services in retail banking or explore the Private Banking sector.

The participants in these projects had to consider current market trends, legal regulations and customer expectations, allowing them to gain valuable experience and practical problem-solving skills. They also explored how the profile of Poland's wealthiest people is evolving and what this means for the banking sector.

Another example is SGH collaboration with Samsung Electronics Poland as part of the *Creative Problem-Solving Process and Design Thinking* course (CEMS). This course introduced students to the design thinking methodology for creative problem solving. Students learned how to analyse and address challenges while keeping the user's needs in mind. The course combined theory with practice, applying the learning-by-doing model.

The classes incorporated diverse educational tools such as

- Lectures presenting creative work methodologies and the essence of design thinking;
- Workshops guiding students through the problem-solving process, from identifying the issue to brainstorming solutions and planning actions;
- Hands-on workshops focused on applying design thinking and prototyping;
- A study visit combined with practical workshops on using new technologies in education, held at Samsung's Warsaw showroom.

As part of the course, students were tasked with creating an innovative educational project focused on entrepreneurship using AI, VR, and Metaverse technologies. The project had to be user-centered while also considering business aspects such as the business model and customer value. Through this experience, students not only gained practical skills and knowledge but also developed essential soft, interpersonal and entrepreneurial competencies necessary in today's world.

ACADEMIA AND BUSINESS – A SYNERGISTIC CONNECTION

The integration of academic learning with real business experience benefits both students and companies. Businesses gain access to talented individuals who are well-prepared for professional challenges, while students receive up-to-date practical knowledge and opportunities to build professional networks.

The collaboration between academia and business is, therefore, a cornerstone of success—for SGH and for the future market leaders. In the face of increasing competition in the job market, this integration is a key to success for universities, students and businesses alike. SGH continues its efforts to ensure that education and practice go hand in hand, creating value added for the entire economy. 

PATRYCJA DUTKIEWICZ, former Director of the Centre for Corporate Relations, SGH



↑ Up to 4,500 people visit SGH during the job fair

Job Fairs – a relic of the past?

 PATRYCJA DUTKIEWICZ

In the era dominated by mobile applications, do face-to-face contact with a potential employer and events like job fairs still make sense?

Recent years have shown how many processes can be successfully optimised through new technologies. Cloud computing is no longer exotic, even if understanding of its data processing model is not always straightforward. We can now conduct meetings, conferences, practical training, recruitment and onboarding processes online. Contracts can be signed and documents circulated without printing a single page. Even getting

a prescription is now just a tap on the phone rather than a morning rush to the nearest clinic. On one hand, this has become our everyday reality, on the other, it creates a kind of bubble and oversimplification.

The recent surge in AI tools such as ChatGPT further enhances this transformation. They enable rapid analysis and summarisation of materials, create marketing content, draft cohesive and engaging articles and assist in data analysis by delivering more accurate and context-aware insights.

Now, let us compare this world of technological progress, convenience and digital abundance with a traditional but accessible way of meeting future employers—job fairs. This brings us back to our original question: are job fairs a relic of the past or an enduring tradition? It may sound like navigating with a paper map in the age of GPS. But could it be that, despite the rapid development of digital solutions, traditional networking still offers significant benefits for both job seekers and employers?

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF JOB FAIRS?

First and foremost, job fairs offer an opportunity not just to gain but also to verify knowledge about a prospective employer. While the internet bombards us with information that shapes our perceptions, an in-person conversation allows us to confirm our assumptions and gather additional, more detailed insights. A convenient form—providing access to multiple employers in one place—also saves job seekers valuable time.

Besides getting to know a company better, job fairs also help candidates stay informed about the current labour market trends, enabling more strategic career planning. In a less formal and stressful setting, attendees can ask recruiters about the hiring process, job openings and even get a sense of the company organisational culture. With both recruiters and interns present, job seekers have a unique chance to ask questions that could make their future job interviews easier. They can also learn practical, insider tips from slightly more experienced peers—insights that are rarely found online.

DOES CHATGPT SEE IT DIFFERENTLY?

Apart from the well-known and still relevant benefits of job fairs, ChatGPT consistently highlights that despite the digitalisation of networking and recruitment, direct personal interactions remain invaluable. It points out that these events benefit both sides: employers can gain insight into the expectations and needs of the younger workforce while also keeping an eye on industry trends and competitors.

Interestingly, AI also emphasises the advantage of personal impressions and networking. It is hard to argue with this. A face-to-face meeting helps employers remember candidates better while allowing job seekers to form their

own impressions of a company atmosphere and culture. No app or algorithm, no matter how advanced, can fully replace that.

“THE BEST WAY TO PREDICT THE FUTURE IS TO CREATE IT”

Peter Drucker’s words resonate strongly here. The direction we take and how we utilise available tools and technologies is up to us. However, for now, the concern that job fairs will be entirely replaced by digital alternatives can be set aside. Each semester, universities and cities host numerous career-related events, from general job fairs to industry-specific ones.

At SGH, the tradition holds strong. Each year, many job fairs take place within the university walls, with *Career Day* (autumn) and the *SGH Student Job Fair* (spring) standing out as key events. These two staples on the academic calendar attract crowds of students and top employers alike.

Perhaps in the future, job fairs will transition into the metaverse, allowing us to meet with companies in a virtual Main Hall, no matter where we are in the world. Maybe AI-driven applications will match candidates with their perfect employers based on complex algorithms analysing our digital activity. After all, chatbots already conduct preliminary interviews.

For now, both ChatGPT and we agree: the best approach is a synergy between available technology and direct human interaction. This remains the most effective way to maximise benefits to everyone involved. 📌

PATRYCJA DUTKIEWICZ, former Director of the Centre for Corporate Relations, SGH

Foreign Language Centre's role in supporting students' competences for lifelong learning

IZABELA GODLEWSKA, RENATA JAGACZEWSKA, RENATA NOWICKA



On 3 December 2024, the Foreign Language Centre team – Dr. Izabela Godlewska, Dr. Renata Nowicka, and Dr. Renata Jagaczewska participated in the Seminar *Challenges of Language Education at Universities*. The event was organised by the Polish Rectors Foundation in cooperation with its strategic partner, Pearson Central Europe, and took place at the headquarters of the Polish Rectors Foundation in Warsaw. The seminar focused on introducing trends and challenges related to foreign language teaching at universities from the perspective of both universities and Pearson. The seminar was attended by representatives of academia, educational activists and lecturers from Foreign Language Centres across many Polish cities.

As part of Session I, moderated by doctor Ewa Chmielecka, Leader of the FRP-Pearson Project, entitled *Current challenges of language education at universities*, a lecture entitled *Policy and practices of language education in higher education* was delivered by Jolanta Urbanik, an expert on the internationalisation of education. The lecture highlighted the importance of the European multilingualism

policy in the context of the EU Council Recommendations on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning and a Comprehensive Approach to Language Teaching and Learning. The Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on multilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture was also mentioned.

The next lecture, on the latest trends and solutions in language education in the era of artificial intelligence (AI), was given by Bartłomiej Janiak from Pearson. The speaker emphasised the inevitable integration of software with artificial intelligence as well as a departure from universal AI models in favour of personalised ones, tailored to a specific industry or user, which increases their practical application. However, while there is no doubt that artificial intelligence has brought about a true revolution in language learning and teaching, for example, by monitoring progress in real time, supporting pronunciation learning based on authentic materials and creating immersive learning environments (VR, AR), traditional methods still offer many benefits that this technology cannot replace. In the context of the advantages of traditional learning and teaching, it is certainly important

to emphasise the significance of planning the process of learning a foreign language by professional teaching staff, considering the development of key linguistic and social competences and familiarizing learners with intercultural differences. As is widely known, factors such as interpersonal relationships, emotions, body language and sensitivity, among others, also play an important role in the traditional process of learning foreign languages, while artificial intelligence – although it can certainly stimulate certain elements of communication – is not able to fully reflect them.

As part of Session I, the Foreign Language Centre team delivered a presentation entitled *The Role of the Foreign Language Centre in Supporting Students' Competences for Lifelong Learning*. The presentation was divided into three parts. The first part focused on the Foreign Language Centre teaching offer as a unique added value for the university's academic community. It was emphasised that this offer is exceptionally diverse, and SGH has long been recognised for its very high standards in foreign language teaching. The Foreign Language Centre has been consistently committed to maintaining the highest quality of teaching for decades. As a result, SGH graduates are highly sought-after candidates in the labour market. They are able to communicate effortlessly in foreign languages, participate in exchange programmes and international internships, and possess the social and intercultural competences necessary to thrive in 21st-century society.

The second part of the presentation introduced the concept of key competences. Notably, recent literature highlights a variety of terms synonymous with key competences, such as future skills, transitive competences, and soft skills. It is essential to mention Daniel Goleman's classic concept of "emotional intelligence," which emphasises that, beyond specialised knowledge, emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in achieving excellence at work. Emotional intelligence encompasses personal skills (such as self-awareness, self-regulation, and motivation) and social skills (including empathy, influencing others, understanding, conflict resolution, leadership, driving change, building relationships, cooperation, and teamwork). A clear parallel can be drawn between these essential skills and those outlined in one of the latest editions of the World Economic Forum's report - *The Future of Jobs 2023*. These competences align closely with those that should be cultivated in students, as highlighted by Habilitated Doctor Jakub Brdulak, Professor at the SGH Warsaw School of Economics, including

- creative and critical thinkers,
- problem solvers,
- active citizens,
- responsible citizens,
- lifelong learning¹.

Referring to the support for the development of competences of the future, which for the purposes of the article and didactics applied at the Foreign Language Centre were called personal, social and learning competences, the presentation highlighted how they are implemented in practice. In class, students learn to use a wide range of persuasive and rhetorical techniques to influence their audience. As a result, they develop skills relevant to future managers, marketers, HR specialists, and others. Students analyse ways of constructing a presentation, dividing it into appropriate parts and emphasizing key content elements in a way that makes them easier to remember. They also share mnemonic techniques with the group to support the memorisation process,

as well as tools to help manage time, increase productivity, plan and achieve goals. Examples of such tools are: *Eat the Frog*, the *Pomodoro* technique, *The Golden Hour (Optimal Work)*, *Design Thinking*, and the *Eisenhower matrix*. They learn from the masters of speaking, modeling themselves on the video materials made available to them in class, using anecdotes and storytelling in their speeches, and grouping the content according to the dream framework or disaster framework.

In language classes, teamwork (in pairs and micro-groups) is additionally practiced. For instance, during group projects or case studies, such as designing a logo, branding, and marketing strategy for a specific company, we integrate students' professional experiences with syllabus content, simultaneously enhancing their practical collaboration skills. Students exchange ideas and experiences, which supports the process of lifelong learning.

The paradox of our times lies in the fact that increasing technologisation, including the tools used in the teaching process, makes the teacher's work easier to an unprecedented degree while simultaneously requiring significant time to master these tools. One could echo a statement from the pandemic era and the global shift to remote teaching: technology, in addition to the subject being taught, has become our second profession as teachers—one in which we are constantly improving our skills.

The rise of AI presents vast opportunities in education, particularly in language learning for business and economics. At the Foreign Language Centre, AI has proven valuable for generating lexical tasks, assisting with reports, and summarising texts. It also supports skill development for SGH graduates by simulating business meetings, providing stakeholder perspectives, and enhancing communication strategies. However, despite AI's transformative role, professional educators remain irreplaceable. Effective AI use requires careful oversight and verification by skilled teaching staff, who must continuously refine their expertise. AI is a powerful tool, but its success in education depends on responsible and informed application.

It should therefore be noted that, despite the proliferation of IT, electronic, and artificial intelligence tools—or perhaps even more so—the so-called human, soft factor plays a fundamental role in situations SGH graduates often encounter, such as negotiations, closing sales transactions, or simply establishing contact. Ultimately, persuading an interlocutor or selling a product or service, is achieved through soft skills, emotions, and the charisma of the speaker/seller/marketer, etc. It is thus crucial to emphasise that language classes, inherently focused on communication, have significant potential to enhance skills among students. These skills are essential not only for the professional lives of graduates from an economic and social university but also for individuals navigating modern life in general.

Language classes show that the student is not only a recipient of knowledge but also its co-creator, initiator and catalyst, thanks to the use of various applications and IT tools by students in the process supporting didactics, integration of various experiences, sources of knowledge, communication techniques.

We also note that our classes allow students to express themselves creatively drawing knowledge not only from economic textbooks but from various cultural texts. This approach enables students to benefit from the global intellectual heritage and increase their competences important for personal and professional development. It is worth mentioning a few book titles that

students have referred to on various occasions during language classes as sources of knowledge and models they draw upon, and where the socio-economic profile of the university is present:

- Jeff Bezos, *The Regret Minimisation Framework* – how to make big decisions;
- Nassim Taleb, *The Black Swan* – on the human ability to explain intricate and unpredictable events to oneself;
- Jeff Olson, *The Slight Edge* – how to turn simple daily routines into life success;
- Klaus Schwab, *The Fourth Industrial Revolution* – how to navigate the 4.0 revolution, where the physical and digital worlds merge;
- Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow* – about happiness, satisfaction with a life in which pain is combined with pleasure, and optimisation of the decision-making process, especially in conditions of uncertainty;
- Benjamin Graham, *The Intelligent Investor* (with an introduction by Warren Buffett) – a guide to risk management and investment strategies.

The presentation attempts to formulate the thesis that, thanks to language classes, SGH students become citizens of the world who are sensitive to contemporary ethical issues. The topics discussed include the ethics of supply chains, areas of poverty, modern exclusion, sustainable development, and neurodiversity. The discussions on these topics (in connection with various language exercises) help students formulate and express their opinions in relation to the issues of the modern world. These activities inevitably allow participants of the teaching process to integrate experiences – personal, academic, organisational, among others – through participation in clubs and organisations within SGH and beyond.

Our presentation at the Polish Rectors Foundation highlighted how language classes at the Foreign Language Centre provide a universal and holistic education. By integrating exact sciences with the humanities, students develop both hard and soft skills essential for an economic and social university. Tailored instruction, syllabus alignment with the university profile, and a strong focus on communication help students express themselves and expand their horizons. As Ludwig Wittgenstein said, “The limits of my language are the limits of my world.” This approach gives graduates a competitive edge, blending academic knowledge, professional experience and organisational skills for career success.

The third part of the presentation was devoted to the role of the Foreign Language Centre as a potential partner for external and business environments. Recognising the need to develop the aforementioned personal, social, and foreign language learning competences also outside the language courses, the Foreign Language Centre has developed a plan of possible directions of growth. This plan includes a range of initiatives aimed at supporting students in building intercultural competences and gaining practical experience in an international business environment while simultaneously improving their language skills.

A key element of this strategy is the cooperation of the Foreign Language Centre with international external institutions, such as chambers of commerce or diplomatic missions to organise meetings between their representatives and SGH students. These meetings can provide students with an excellent opportunity to learn about the practical aspects of international business operations and to gain valuable experience in foreign language


communication. Students participating in such meetings will have the chance to expand their knowledge of business trends, understand the current challenges faced by international enterprises, explore opportunities for international collaboration and gain a better understanding of intercultural differences in business and diplomacy. At the same time, they will develop practical language skills in a business context.

Another initiative in the Foreign Language Centre development strategy involves encouraging students to participate in events and workshops organised by external institutions. One example includes debates and simulations hosted by the European Parliament. During such events, students, using a chosen foreign language, take on the roles of Members of the European Parliament, negotiate and decide whether to pass or reject specific EU directives.

In addition, the Foreign Language Centre development plan includes workshops conducted in foreign languages to support the development of soft skills. These workshops are an initiative that combines learning and improving a foreign language with the development of key skills needed in professional and personal life. The workshops will cover issues such as interpersonal communication, time management, relationship building, conflict resolution and teamwork skills, among others.

Session II of the seminar featured a discussion panel on the necessity of increasing the language exam requirements for graduation at Level 8 of the Polish Qualifications Framework. The session was moderated by Lucyna Skwarko, President of the SERMO Association and Director of the Foreign Language Centre at the Warsaw University of Technology. Currently, a doctorate may be awarded to a person with foreign language proficiency at a minimum of B2 level. However, many academics believe that this standard should be raised to C1.

During Session III, panelists sought to answer the question whether the list of certificates verifying foreign language proficiency should be regulated by a Ministry of Science and Higher Education directive or left to the discretion of individual universities. The panel was moderated by Dr. Sylwia Kossakowska-Pisarek, while Anna Kowalczyk, Sales Director, Pearson, introduced participants to Pearson's latest language exams.

The seminar's theme perfectly aligns with expectations regarding language education at universities and its role in the era of rapid technological advancements, including the development of artificial intelligence. The event provided an opportunity to gain valuable insights, establish connections, and participate in discussions about the future of language education. 

DOCTOR IZABELA GODLEWSKA, the Foreign Language Centre, English Language Department, SGH

DOCTOR RENATA JAGACZEWSKA, the Foreign Language Centre, German Language Department, SGH

DOCTOR RENATA NOWICKA, the Foreign Language Centre, English Language Department, SGH

¹ J. Brdulak, *Education - student-lecturer relationship*, SGH Magazine, 22 June 2021



Kalecki and the Keynesian Revolution

 JAN TOPOROWSKI



Just over half a century ago (on 17 April 1970), a distinguished economist, Michał Kalecki died in Warsaw. In the 1930s and 40s, he achieved international renown as a co-founder of what came to be known as the Keynesian Revolution, before passing into the company of “interesting” but neglected thinkers, both for an older generation of mainstream economists and the pantheon of Post-Keynesian and heterodox economists, the latter searching for a more contemporary criticism of capitalism than that provided by Karl Marx and a sharper criticism than that provided by Keynes. The comparison with the two critics is illuminating, even if, in a relatively brief article like this one, it is impossible to do full justice to the ideas of any of them.

EARLY YEARS

Michał Kalecki was born on 22 June 1899 in Łódź into a Jewish family which had assimilated into Polish culture and the Polish language serving as a common language in a city mixing Russians, Poles, Germans, Austrians and Jews. His father, Abram Kalecki, owned a small spinning mill, which afforded him a life of modest comfort, supporting an elegant wife, Klara and then their son.

However, the outbreak of revolution in the Russian empire in 1905 shattered their comfort. As the largest industrial centre of the empire, Łódź was thrown into chaos with riots, street fighting, assassinations and factory occupations by workers, made only worse by the brutal attempts of authorities to suppress the revolt. Despite the imposition of martial law in 1905, at the request of the larger factory owners, social unrest continued right up to the outbreak of World War I. The socialists were not the only source of trouble. Polish nationalists targeted Jewish businesses and socialist leaders for attack. In 1910, Klara Kalecka left her unlucky

family. Three years later, in 1913, Abram Kalecki shut down his factory.

The young Kalecki completed his school education in an atmosphere of insecurity, insurrectionary chaos and, from 1915, German occupation that reduced the city to poverty. He went on to study engineering in Warsaw and then Gdańsk, with a brief period of military service in between. However, without financial support he was forced to abandon his studies. He returned to Łódź, where he supported himself and his father with business and financial journalism, becoming an expert on the international corporations that dominated manufacturing and mining in Poland. This led to his first proper job, in the research Institute for the Study of Business Cycles and Prices (Instytut Badań Koniunktur Gospodarczych i Cen) established in Warsaw in 1928 by the Polish Ministry of Trade and Industry. Kalecki was the Institute specialist on business cartels. The post enabled him to marry Ada Szternfeld, who was also from Łódź.

The work in Warsaw also introduced him to a more academically accomplished Oskar Lange and his Union of Independent Socialist Youth (Związek Niezależnej Młodzieży Socjalistycznej). Lange, a Marxist, had his doctorate in economics from the ancient university in Kraków. He had been expelled from the Polish Socialist Party for being too left-wing. The Union of Independent Socialist Youth was thus independent of the older established Polish Socialist Party. But it was also too critical of developments in the neighbouring Soviet Union to be aligned to the Polish Communist Party. Many of Kalecki's first economic analyses appeared in the Union's monthly *Socialist Review* (*Przegląd Socjalistyczny*) until it was shut down by the authorities at the end of 1932.

In the following year, the Institute published Kalecki's *Essay on the Business Cycle Theory* aiming to show how market forces bring capitalist

economies not to any kind of equilibrium, with all resources fully utilised, but make those economies move naturally between booms and slumps. Arguably, the essay contains in summary the essential ideas of Kalecki's economics, even if he would modify their mathematical formulations in years to come.

After Piłsudski's coup in 1926. The economic situation in Poland deteriorated, in the wake of the 1929 crash (Poland experienced the biggest fall in national income among all European countries at that time), and the military government became more and more repressive, emulating the bombastic nationalism and xenophobia of the Italian Fascists. In 1935, unable to get a permanent university position, Oskar Lange got out and went to the United States on a Rockefeller Fellowship. In 1936, Kalecki's turn came. He went first to Sweden and then to London, where Keynes had just published his *General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*. The coincidence between their ideas was striking. But their respective political economies differed. This paradox is explored in the rest of this article.

KALECKI MEETS KEYNES

To understand the intellectual coincidence between the two economists; indeed, to understand the nature of what is called the Keynesian Revolution, it is necessary to define what that revolution was. The most common interpretation among economists and non-economists, uniting post-Keynesians, with more mainstream Keynesians, Keynes's followers, such as Joan Robinson, Nicholas Kaldor and theorists of the post-1940s neo-classical synthesis, such as Paul Samuelson, Oskar Lange and John Hicks, is the notion that, in the capitalist market economy, production and employment are constrained by aggregate demand. The revolution effectively discredited the "neo-classical" idea prevailing from the 1870s according to which full employment would be assured with price and wage flexibility.

But the idea claiming that output and employment are limited by market demand was not new in the time of Keynes and Kalecki. It was already well known before the 1930s, and not just in the "underworld of underconsumptionists", such as Jean Charles de Sismondi, Karl Marx, Thorstein Veblen and John A. Hobson, but also among widely respected theorists of the monetary business cycle, such as Ralph Hawtrey, whose 1913 book *Good and Bad Trade* contains the first use and definition of the term "effective demand" ("A want becomes an effective demand when the person who experiences the want possesses (and can spare) the purchasing power necessary to meet the price of the thing that will satisfy it.")

Another definition of the Keynesian Revolution that later took hold, following Keynesians such as George Shackle, was the idea that, at the core of Keynes's Revolution was the introduction of uncertainty and expectations into the process of economic decision-making. The notion that people hold money because they are uncertain about the future became a staple of post-Keynesian monetary theory. This is certainly an idea which Keynes employed in an original way in the monetary analysis in the *General Theory*. But uncertainty and expectations had been widely discussed among leading economists well before Keynes added his monetary and philosophical reflections. In the United States, uncertainty and expectations as the foundations of institutions and decisions were well known from the work of Veblen and Frank Knight. In Europe, Friedrich von Hayek, whose political economy shared nothing with Keynes and Kalecki, made

uncertainty a cornerstone of Austrian accounts of market process and entrepreneurship. Marxists too had long contrasted the "chaos" of market capitalism with the certainty provided by economic planning.

There is a related definition that highlights Keynes's recognition that modern market economies lack the kind of market coordination provided by a Walrasian "auctioneer" to ensure that trade only occurs at equilibrium prices. This somewhat more refined version of the "market chaos" idea made something of a come-back among "New Keynesian" economists, emphasising the problems of information in decentralised decision-making. However, it had been explored, for example, by Swedish economists before Keynes presented his distinctive critique of decentralised economic decision-making, weakening Keynes's claims to its discovery.

The fundamental intellectual innovation Kalecki and Keynes shared was something different. It was the realisation that, in a capitalist economy, with only capitalists and workers, where production is undertaken for profit, output and employment are determined by the level of investment. Kalecki's explanation for this (and Keynes's, but not in his *General Theory*) was disarmingly simple. If capitalists sell their goods to earn a profit, then the most that they, altogether as capitalists, can recover by selling to their workers is the total value of what capitalists have paid them in wages. To obtain a profit over their wage costs, capitalists have to sell to someone else, not their workers. This can only be the capitalists themselves, buying equipment for investment or luxury goods for their own consumption.

This definition of Keynes's and Kalecki's fundamental innovation is important because it puts their work in a much clearer contrast with the macroeconomic theory of their time. In the neo-classical version of macroeconomics, total output and employment is determined by the total amount of available factors of production. Within this, actual employment is supposed to be determined, in inverse proportion, by the real wage rate which determines business demand for labour. Kalecki's demolition of this view, arguing that wage changes have complex effects on output and employment that overall largely cancel each other out, was accorded high praise by Keynes.

The alternative to the neo-classical view was the underconsumptionist view, going back to the Ricardian socialists of the mid-nineteenth century. They argued that poverty and unemployment exist because workers do not receive the full value of their labour. A later critic of the neo-classical view, J.A. Hobson, linked this to the unequal distribution of income, arguing that people with higher incomes save too much. Low real wages mean that consumption is inadequate to secure full employment (the view of Veblen and the followers of Marx). In this way, the underconsumptionists were the original proponents of the idea that effective demand constrains aggregate output and employment.

Both Keynes and Kalecki deplored low wages for moral and social reasons because low wages and unemployment were unjust outcomes of free market capitalism, rather than because low wages *cause* unemployment. And the wage share is a misleading policy tool in an economy that produces for profit rather than to raise wages. Kalecki was adamant that investment determines output and employment because, stripped to its essentials, the money spent on investment accrues through the market process to capitalists as profits, and those profits motivate production and employment.

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF KALECKI AND KEYNES

By thinking through the income and expenditure flows in a capitalist economy, Kalecki and Keynes independently worked out the key factor that determines the level of employment in an economy. They also shared a joint commitment to full employment, a commitment that was common enough after the seemingly intractable mass unemployment of the Great Depression of the 1930s: the only difference between economists at the time on this matter was whether the unemployed would find work if wages fell sufficiently low (the neo-classical position opposed by Keynes and Kalecki); or whether unemployment could be resolved by raising wages (the underconsumptionist view); or whether it could be achieved by government expenditure (the position of Keynes and Kalecki).

After World War II, the association of Keynes's name with a general doctrine of aggregate demand management stuck, and indeed the postwar decades came to be known as the Keynesian era. In truth, government policies at the time bore only a superficial resemblance to the actual policies that Keynes advocated. Keynes argued for permanently low interest rates (his "euthanasia of the rentier") and higher taxes on the rich. But a fiscal stimulus was to be restricted to periods of economic recession, and he was cautious about supporting the comprehensive welfare programme put forward by William Beveridge, which Keynes thought would burden the taxpayer excessively. A fiscal stimulus, Keynes thought, should be conducted by public works, rather than the expansion of welfare and public services, and nationalisation was an irrelevance. Keynes believed that in this way it is possible to secure full employment without changing capitalism. Fiscal policies in post-war Europe and North America embraced aggregate demand management, which has loosely been referred to as "Keynesian". But comprehensive social insurance and government control of leading sectors of the economy were much closer to the ideas of Hobson, who had argued for social welfare, redistributive fiscal policies, and government management of the economy even before World War I.

Kalecki's political economy was far more radical. Keynes sometimes wrote as if we could have full employment in capitalism, once everyone came to their senses and realised how right Keynes was. Kalecki knew that full employment would be contested by capitalists because it threatened their "power in society". Full employment would remove the threat of unemployment that employers hold over their workers to keep them subservient. The working class would "acquire confidence". In this way, full employment (rather than economic crisis) would be the transition to socialism.

Along the way, there would of course be distributional problems, if workers in certain industries pushed for higher wages than elsewhere. But these were political rather than economic difficulties. Capitalists may respond to the loss of their power with an "investment strike". They might talk about it. But Kalecki doubted that businessmen would forego profitable opportunities for investment in order to make a political point. As he later observed, "capitalists do many things as a class, but they certainly do not invest as a class" because they are motivated in their investments by the profits of their firm, rather than the profits of their class.


Keynes's death in 1946 did not only facilitate the misinterpretation of his economics and political economy, it also meant that he was not around to comment critically on the policies to which his name was attached. Kalecki, however, lived for almost a quarter of a century longer: from 1945 to 1955, working at the

International Labour Organisation, and then in the United Nations in Montreal and New York, and then back in Warsaw at the Polish Planning Commission and doing research and teaching. He did not lose faith in the cardinal principle of political economy contained in the Keynesian Revolution, namely the ability of the state to secure full employment through fiscal policy. But he was much more critical of how this was achieved, if at all, in the capitalist countries.

Kalecki identified the roots of German and Japanese industrial success with their military defeat in World War II. The ban on heavy armaments production in those countries, imposed by the victorious powers, was followed by rearmament, which obliged the governments of the defeated powers to buy their military equipment from the United States and Britain. In exchange, Germany and Japan won access to those markets for their industrial exports. The resulting arrangement handed industrial superiority to Germany and Japan, whose capitalists had no alternative but to invest in industry with civilian uses, and directed US and British capitalists to armaments production that depended on political decisions on war or the threat of war, rather than civilian production with more dynamic and socially useful markets.

FINAL YEARS

In the final decade of his life, Kalecki gradually fell out with the political authorities in Poland. The purpose of socialism, he thought, was to improve the lives of working people and he was unforgiving of socialist governments that failed to secure that improvement. The usual reason behind this failure was the pursuit of some political goals, whether military superiority or industrialisation, which promised future triumph and diverted resources from the supply of wage goods for workers today. As "meat crises" (shortages of basic consumer goods) became endemic in Communist Poland, Kalecki's criticism of visionary planning aroused the hostility of the political leadership. The political response was primitive. After the defeat of Poland's Arab allies by Israel in the Six Day War in 1967, Jews were purged from the Polish government, universities and the professions. In addition, Kalecki and other critics were condemned for "revisionism" and "sowing confusion in political economy". Kalecki's followers were expelled from the ruling party (many of them, as sincere socialists, had been its members), fired from their jobs, and forced into exile.

Kalecki was horrified, and not just by the recurrence of the ancient social pathology of antisemitism. At times, he even speculated whether the US government was not behind the effort to crush the modern research and teaching in political economy that he had built up in Warsaw. But after a two-month stay with old friends at Cambridge in the UK, he returned to Poland, where he died on 17 April 1970. 

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Welcome to the SGH Theatre

ALICJA CHRUSZCZEWSKA

So, on 23 March, we visited the Academic Center of Culture and Art “Od Nowa” during the KLAMRA Festival in Toruń. In the group of Polish independent theatres and the alternative scene, we presented the play *Love for an hour*. Is it still possible to say something new about love without bordering on cliché? Philosophers wrote about it and poets sang about it. In the new performance of the SGH Theatre, you will not hear the songs of wandering knights or the sobs of a princess imprisoned in the tower. Instead, we will have a look at a subtle... or a less subtle interpersonal game. Is there still room for feelings in the world of lies and insincerity, or is it just a game? Or maybe love happiness is available... only for an hour?

But let's return to our theatrical struggle on stage. Last year, the SGH Theatre had the pleasure of taking part in the 2024 *Szpulka Festival of Amateur Theatres* at Sokółów Podlaski, where we staged the play *We are happy*. We left the stage not only with satisfaction, but also with an award for the acting episode for Paweł Lesner for the role of Pepe. At the *Student Theatre Spring 2024* in Lublin, we staged *White Nights* – a play inspired by the famous short story by Fyodor Dostoyevsky. This performance was created during the difficult times of the COVID-19 pandemic, but it bravely stood the test of time and to this day holds a unique place in the hearts of the actors of our theatre.

The year 2024 crowns a special achievement. We took the first place at the *December Academic Artistic Review 2024* for the aforementioned performance *Love for an hour*, so you cannot miss this spiritual feast during the upcoming performances.

We would not have achieved these successes without the participation of our director Jerzy Łazewski, an actor and an outstanding specialist in the field of the culture of the living word. Also without the involvement of the irreplaceable members of the Theatre – light and sound operators, stage designers, costume designers and, finally, actors – none of the plays would have seen the light of day. It should not be forgotten that each performance is the fruit of cooperation and friendship of all members of the Theatre, as well as the result of constant

For 17 years now, the SGH Theatre has performed on the stage at numerous festivals throughout Poland. **The group has been working all the time since 2008** and is thriving, taking up a wide range of topics in its repertoire.



↑ Play *Love for an hour* in the Cultural Centre at Stare Babice

care and commitment of the management board.

Our entire troupe does not rest on the laurels. We are currently working on a play based on Molière's drama *The Bourgeois Gentleman*. But don't worry – our new play will not only feature the Baroque harpsichord. Get ready for an action full of surprising twists crowned with songs straight from ... the 19th century! And you may even meet Molière himself?

The theatre will open its doors during the October recruitment. We are extremely curious about your energy and ideas – so be sure to follow us on Facebook under the name Teatr Scena Główna Handlowa and check out our Instagram, where you will find the latest news! 📷

ALICJA CHRUSZCZEWSKA, SGH Theatre actress



† Concert of the SGH Choir

SGH Choir

 MAJA KAMIŃSKA

The SGH Warsaw School of Economics Choir is a group of students and alumni united by their passion for singing. For over 30 years, the ensemble has performed at concerts, participated in festivals and won awards in competitions. Under the direction of Dr. Tomasz Hynek and Basia Bowtruczuk, with Natalia Bilenka overseeing vocal training, the choir explores a diverse repertoire ranging from sacred music to contemporary pop hits. The group has built its reputation both in Poland and internationally, earning prestigious awards and captivating audiences with remarkable musical interpretations.

MUSICAL VERSATILITY AND ARTISTIC PASSION

The choir performs both classical and contemporary works. Its repertoire includes sacred compositions, choral music from different eras, and arrangements of popular songs. Among the pieces performed are classical works by Bach, Mendelssohn, and Szymanowski, as well as contemporary compositions by renowned artists like Arvo Pärt and Paweł Łukaszewski. The ensemble also embraces sophisticated arrangements of pop music, featuring songs by the Beatles, Queen, Maanam and ABBA hits.

30TH ANNIVERSARY JUBILEE


In 2024, the SGH Choir celebrated its 30th anniversary. To mark the occasion, a special concert was held to showcase the ensemble's rich history and achievements. Former and current

choir members, as well as guests connected to the choir's legacy, participated in the event. The concert programme spanned the choir's diverse repertoire, from sacred choral pieces to modern arrangements.

CONCERTS, FESTIVALS AND INTERNATIONAL SUCCESS

The SGH Choir goes beyond the academic stage, regularly participating in prestigious festivals and international competitions. Each season of intense rehearsals culminates in exceptional concerts. The choir has performed at major venues, including the National Philharmonic and the Grand Theatre in Warsaw and even at the German Bundestag. Its concerts in Portugal, Italy, Switzerland and Ukraine were met with enthusiastic acclaim.

SGH CHOIR – MORE THAN JUST SINGING

Besides rehearsals and performances, the choir organises workshops, trips and community events. Each year, it welcomes new members, offering them the chance to be part of something unique. Being a member of the SGH Choir is not only about developing vocal skills but also about building lasting friendships, experiencing joy and creating unforgettable memories. The choir opens its doors annually to new voices, forming a strong and close-knit musical family. 

MAJA KAMIŃSKA, SGH Choir Manager



SGH lives for sports and physical activity

 MICHAŁ BERNARDELLI



Renowned universities worldwide are famous for their research achievements, well-known scientists, outstanding discoveries and excellent opportunities they create for athletes. The history of sports is inextricably linked to the academic environment. Sports also play a significant role at the SGH Warsaw School of Economics. For instance, in the recruitment process for Bachelor studies, you can receive points for sports achievements. We also participate in ministerial programmes supporting sports at universities and promoting a dual career for athletes. All key activities at SGH in the field of sport or physical activity in general can be summarised in three areas.

On the one hand, there are sports competitions within the structures of the Academic Sports

Association. SGH students participate in over 30 sports disciplines, often winning top positions in the general or socio-natural sciences classification. The most outstanding representatives of SGH bring medals from international competitions, including the Universiade. We also had our representatives at each of the last three Olympic Games, and among our graduates, we can boast medalists of the European, World and Olympic Championships. The best SGH athletes are granted awards at the SGH Sports Gala every year. We can also find athletes among the winners of the medal for meritorious service to the SGH Warsaw School of Economics. These are multi-medalists: Ewa Kłobukowska, Grażyna Rabsztyń and Teresa Sukniewicz-Kleiber.

However, sports are not only about competition; they are an integral part of student life and



PHOTO: SWIMMING SECTION'S ARCHIVE

↑ Training of the swimming section of AZS SGH (Academic Sports Association of SGH)

an element of the study programme at the Bachelor level. Physical education classes offer a range of sports disciplines, from basketball, football, and volleyball, to gym, aerobics, and yoga, to tennis, swimming and sailing. SGH has a well-developed sports culture that encourages students to participate in physical activities regardless of their skill level. In addition to the obligation to participate in physical education classes for first-year students, they are also available to every student, emphasising full inclusiveness and openness to people with special needs at every step. It is worth focusing on the goal of physical education classes at SGH, which is entirely consistent with the academic idea. Improving motor skills is secondary at this development stage young people. Classes are intended to help students learn systematicity and show the ability to balance the needs of the body and mind. Also, they are meant to make students aware of the need for self-discipline and care for one's health throughout life. However, it is the social responsibility that is a key to university physical education. While it is difficult to convince people discouraged from this form of self-fulfillment and development to increase their physical activity significantly, this area of life cannot be ignored in building student bonds and interpersonal relationships. This is particularly important in the first year of studies, a leap between high school and adulthood. A perfect example of such classes is ballroom dancing, one of the most popular and frequently chosen subjects among all physical education classes. Establishing contacts at this stage facilitates subsequent semesters of study among different groups of people attending classes selected according to the preferences of each student. SGH must pay close attention to the holistic development of the graduates' figures in shaping leaders. Meanwhile, the knowledge transferred during physical education classes bears fruit in later contacts at work, especially in the business world. Here, we find a close analogy with building relationships with the customer, which in simple terms comes down to creating and maintaining long-term interactions between a company and its customers.

Shaping pro-social attitudes and promoting physical activity increases the chances of introducing positive changes in a broader social context. Such an impact on society fits perfectly into the mission of SGH. The third area of physical activity in SGH is striving for greater social integration by organising cultural and sports events available to people from different backgrounds, regardless of their physical condition or social status. Many such events have become a permanent part of the SGH calendar. These include sailing regattas, the SGH run, or strongman, indoor football and streetball tournaments. There is no shortage of non-cyclical events for an international group of participants. One such event was the *CIVICA Sport*

and Culture Festival organised on Lake Zegrze in 2024, which allowed for the active integration of over 250 people from 10 different universities in the CIVICA consortium. The idea, goals and implications of the festival were perfectly summed up by CIVICA Executive Director Aurélien Krejbich: "While CIVICA is focusing primarily on education and research, holding events in an informal setting and facilitating interactions across our communities around sports and culture contribute greatly to the building of a common sense of belonging and allow new connections that ultimately lead to new projects or initiatives."

In addition to sports and cultural events or strictly sports events, SGH places a large part of its involvement in activities that constitute the essence of the university's existence, namely scientific research. Members of the SGH community often present the results of their research in the broadly understood area of sports in debates or scientific conferences. These include, for example, the applications of artificial intelligence in sports frequently considered now, the role of physical activity in society for the state, but also various aspects of financing sports. In January this year, SGH also hosted the first conference in Poland addressing the subject of sports in the economic dimension, i.e. its financing and management. It was a response to the concept of sports in the context of demographic and geopolitical conditions, as well as changes in the system of human values and the prioritisation of various areas of life. The conference topics primarily concerned the role and importance of public and commercial funds in financing sports, contemporary trends in sports management and through sports, as well as the social dimension of physical culture. The conference was held in three panels led by scientists, sports activists, and representatives of businesses supporting sports. Like many SGH initiatives, this one also met with great interest, and the participants and discussants were representatives of various environments: clubs, sports associations and organisations, sports and athletes associations, scientific institutions, ministries, as well as journalists, social activists and sponsors.

Sport has been an inseparable part of every community life. It is also an essential aspect of SGH activities and interests in theory, research, and pure practice. For many years, we have been involved and have achieved many successes in each of these fields. We also have ambitious plans for the future. Still, the central point of these plans is physical activity and promoting a healthy lifestyle throughout the academic community. 🇵🇱

HABILITATED DOCTOR MICHAŁ BERNARDELLI

Professor at SGH, Head of Physical Education and Sport Center, Probabilistic Methods Unit, Collegium of Economic Analysis, SGH

Eye to eye with the iceboating world vice champion



MAGDALENA BRYK

Magdalena Bryk: I probably won't surprise you with this question, but it's hardly possible not to begin with it. Where did the idea to practise this sport come from? I think you will agree with me that iceboating is not the most popular sport.

Cezary Sternicki: Yes, I agree (laughs). The idea was not mine, but my sailing coach's. I trained sailing at the Baza Mrągowo club (one of the oldest sailing clubs in Poland) and one winter the coach asked us if we wanted to try our hand at iceboating. Back then, the winters were cold enough so you could train in Poland, also in my hometown of Mrągowo. Lake Czos was frozen for several months, the equipment was in the club, the coach was there too, so there could not have been a better opportunity to try. Some people liked it and stayed for longer – just like me. And so I've been training iceboating for 10 years now.

Did you immediately quit sailing for iceboating or did you combine these two sports for some time?

Initially, I combined them. Water sailing is more prestigious because it is an Olympic sport. Iceboating is rather off the beaten track, so I tried to reconcile these two for a few years. Over time, however, sailing required more and more commitment, both in terms of time and money, and more or less at the beginning of high school, I focused only on iceboating. You can't make a living from sailing without being at the Olympic level, so it was also getting harder and harder and this decision was just reasonable.

Once you have touched on the topic of money, is it possible to make a living from iceboat racing?

Not at all (laughs). But it seems to me that it is simply a more interesting sport. Besides, the specificity is different. The season is definitely shorter than in the case of sailing. Some, of course, get prepared all the year round, but the vast majority of iceboaters start preparing a few months before the start, and before that they have a break of several

At the beginning of February 2024, he again stood on the podium of the World Championships in the DN class – the world's largest iceboat class. **Cezary Sternicki**, a student of the SGH Warsaw School of Economics and a member of the AZS SGH sailing club, talks about the beginnings of his sports career, training off-season and plans for the future.



PHOTO: HERKULES PIEREWOJ

months. In the case of sailing, this is practically impossible – you have to be involved in it all the year round. In other words, even the top iceboaters are able to reconcile sport with paid work, which is almost impossible in the case of water sailors. There is also a small group among us who make a living from professional sea sailing, and iceboating in winter is simply an additional sport.

How many months a year do you train?

Roughly speaking, from December to March. But you should remember that iceboating is not only about what you do on the ice, but also about your work on the equipment, and you can definitely do it all the year round. The preparation of the iceboat translates into the speed to be achieved and, consequently, the result in the competition. This is a fast sport. We are talking about speeds of up to 120 km/h. If your iceboat is able to accelerate to a maximum speed of 115 km/h, and the competitor next to you, thanks to better preparation, makes it 120 km/h, then on a 20-kilometer route you have no chance against such a rival.

Do you have your own equipment now or do you continue to train on the club equipment?

Currently, I have my own equipment, only a few parts are club-owned. I could continue training on the club's equipment, but I would not have a chance for such results. Iceboating is a strictly equipment based sport and even a 10-time world champion on a poor iceboat will not be able to race for medals.

We've already agreed that you will not make money on iceboating, so how much do you have to spend? It is an expensive sport, isn't it?

Yes, it is an expensive sport with a high entry barrier. Maintaining the equipment is no longer that expensive, but buying all the necessary components is a considerable expense. If you would like to buy everything new from the manufacturer, it is an expense of about 80 thousand zlotys and then you will not have many sets of runners. And you need several sets of such runners, i.e. the elements that come into direct contact with ice. The best iceboaters have up to 10-15 of them, and each costs from 4 to 10 thousand zlotys! In addition, you have to keep this iceboat somewhere out of season. If someone doesn't have a garage, it causes more costs, fortunately I have one at home, so at least this lets save (laughs).

So you should have an additional 100 thousand for the runners alone?

Well, maybe not that much, at least not at the beginning. Such basic equipment for 80 thousand zlotys usually includes two or three sets of runners. That's why most of us start by buying used components. Used equipment can be bought for only 30-40 thousand zlotys and such an iceboat will be reasonably good. Usually, the equipment is accumulated over years – one year you buy a hull for 10 thousand, the next – a mast for another 10 thousand and so on for five or six years until the whole thing is completed. Therefore, we, young iceboaters, have very little chance to compete against the older guys. Apart from experience, which is also, of course, very important, they have the equipment that we simply cannot compare ours to.

Thus, how much success in this sport comes from the equipment, and how much from the athletes themselves and their experience?

This is a difficult question. As you also have to understand that equipment alone does not guarantee success. You have to be able to prepare and "pamper" it. A lot of things in this equipment are to be changed and you need to know how to use it, e.g. how to sharpen the runners, which sail to choose, etc. But to answer the question – the equipment itself is about 20-30% of success. But if you add in the ability to trim it and react to changes in the conditions during competitions, we already come up to about 70-80% of success.

Oh, that's a lot! Do you have your own serviceman or are you one yourself?

I am a serviceman myself. Iceboats are a bit of "secret knowledge". Few people know that we have to acquire this knowledge ourselves either by trial and error, or by asking more experienced people – coaches or other competitors. And surely, if my equipment was set up by the senior world champion, he would be able to squeeze more out of it than what I am currently able to do on my own.

And you can really approach the senior world champion and ask how to trim the equipment?

Of course, some people are more willing to share their knowledge than others, but yes – we ask older guys about many things. Some of them answer only perfunctorily, but you can really learn a lot from some others. We, the younger ones, also know who to approach (laughs). Sometimes we also buy something from the older iceboaters (juniors often buy equipment sold by champions), and then we get some instructions and advice at the same time. I think that if I hadn't asked older iceboaters about some things over the years, I wouldn't be where I am or at the level I am at now.

Speaking of which, you are the current world junior vice-champion. Is this your greatest achievement so far? Yes, definitely.**Did you expect this success?**

Let me put it this way: I didn't want not to put too much pressure on myself, but I had it somewhere in the back of my mind. In 2023, however, I was third, in 2022 – fourth, and in 2021, I was also third. After all, I could have expected success, but I tried not to think about it too much, so that I wouldn't blame myself and break down if I didn't succeed. That's why I wasn't surprised by this medal. The gold was close, I lost it by just one race, but I'm happy with the silver. I would also be happy with the bronze, probably not so much with the fourth place (laughs).

And you don't regret that it wasn't the gold after all?

I regret it a bit, because there was a great chance to do it in this regatta. There is a junior from Sweden, Oskar Svensson – a great talent, a sensation on a global scale, who two or three years ago had a bronze medal in the senior world championships. In 2024, he exceptionally did not take part in the regatta, because he is currently doing military service and did not get a leave to come to this competition, so if there was a chance for the gold, it was only now (laughs). When he appears in the regatta, he is practically unbeaten – out of seven races in junior competitions, he usually wins at least six.

This year we did not see you at the start of the World Championships or the European Championships, why?

To cut it short, this year, unfortunately, when the World Championships and the European Junior Championships were planned, there was no ice in this part of Europe, so the decision was made to postpone the competition from February to December 2025. So it's not that I didn't take part, it's just that this year's junior championships haven't taken place yet. The competition you are asking about is the senior regatta, this year was held in the United States. Unfortunately, it is too big a logistical challenge for me at the moment to compete in them (every other year the World Championships are alternately in America and Europe).

The Senior European Championships have also finished recently, but when I already knew that the Junior World Championships would take place in December, I decided that competing in the European Senior Championships would not give me much. The chances for a medal are negligible, and the experience from February in December does not pay off that much.

What are your plans for the coming years? Do you want to continue competing in this sport or did you choose SGH to steer your career in a different direction?

If there are real winters, I will definitely want to compete. Certainly until the end of the junior category, i.e. until the end of 2025. I think that later I will have a break (how long, it remains to be seen), because to match the senior leaders, I would have to devote a lot of time and resources to it.

And you would have to buy a new iceboat?

Probably, I would. And I would have to buy new equipment, refine it and then I could get back to racing.

And when are iceboaters in their prime? How old are the best competitors?

It's a bit of a "sport for greybeards" (laughs). Both sailing and iceboating are largely mental sports. Here, experience combined with equipment really pays off. In Poland, one of the most famous examples is Karol Jabłoński, who won his first world championship title at the age of about 30. Now he is 60 and still competing, and he is among the world's best. In this sport, age definitely does not interfere, and can even help.

Can I say then that you will manage to come back, even if your break lasts several years? And what do you see as the future of this sport in view of warmer winters and global warming?

In 2024, there were three national competitions held, and this is really much with regard to our current winters. For comparison, I will say that two and three years ago there were no competitions in our country, and the same this year. And I still remember that in 2017 there were six or seven competitions; in the past, six to eight competitions could be organised in Poland as a rule. And now you have to hold competitions as soon as there are any conditions. That is why we have to look for ice in Estonia or Finland.

And I assume that countries such as Finland, Estonia or Sweden are a power in this sport.

In fact, we are a power, although it is becoming more and more difficult to find ice and good conditions for training. Last year, there were as many as six Poles in the top ten of the World Championships. Estonia was second and Sweden came third. Poland is currently at a very high level. To become the Polish champion now, you would have to beat the current world champion! Currently, we have five or six active iceboaters who once won medals at the European and World Championships.

Do you think that with the current climate change, this sport has a chance to survive?

Unfortunately not, I'm afraid. The conditions are getting tougher, the winters are getting shorter, and there are very few new racers. In Poland, in five or six years, there will be no more juniors,

because there will not even be a way to show them this sport in the Polish climate. When I competed in the first Ice Optimist competition (a competition for the youngest iceboaters), there were about 50 iceboaters from almost 10 countries on the start line. Currently, although only a few years have passed, there are about 15 iceboats from two countries: Estonia and Lithuania on the start line. So you can see how quickly it is progressing; in a few years, the Ice Optimist class will actually cease to exist. And if there are no youngest now, then in a dozen years there will be no juniors, etc.

Since it is becoming more and more difficult to have a real winter in Poland, how can you prepare for this sport apart from iceboating alone? You mentioned sailing as a good introduction. Does anything else prove useful, perhaps a gym?

Yes, the gym, definitely, especially strength and speed elements and sprints. Strength leg training is particularly useful, because during competitions the iceboats stand on one line and we accelerate them at a signal. We have to sprint hard for the first 5-10 seconds, so definitely strong legs are really necessary then, especially when there is not much wind. In addition, the position in the iceboat itself is unpleasant, because you lie on your back, but your head has to be raised all the time to look towards your feet and see what is happening on the route. The abdominal and neck muscles also need to be well trained. If someone has weak muscles, their head drops, and this is simply dangerous. In addition, in the summer, more and more iceboaters train on foil, i.e. on a boat that rises above the surface of the water at a certain speed and, like the iceboat, moves to a greater extent due to the apparent wind, where the own wind component is much greater than in classic sailing.

Is it a safe sport? At the speeds you reach, broken ice may give rise to a serious accident. Are there many accidents in iceboating?

With safety rules and common sense, it is a safe sport. Of course, the more difficult the conditions, the more dangerous it is, but with gentle winds and clear ice, it is a really safe sport. Of course, the faster, the easier it is to have accidents. There are collisions, including those where the equipment is damaged, but there has not yet been a case of ice breaking. Before the competition, the reservoir is always thoroughly checked by experienced people (at least the part where the competition is held) to make sure that it is a safe place to start. I had two collisions in my career and in both cases the equipment was damaged, but we, the racers, were fine. Yes, there are 50 iceboats on the start line, but during the race they are apart, so this also reduces the risk of a collision.

You said that the ice is checked, but if such a iceboat fell into the water, would it stay on it?

It should, but I haven't tested it yet, thankfully.

And let's hope it stays that way! And finally – what shall I wish you?

Thick ice and cold winters.

And that's exactly what I wish you, thank you very much for your time and the interview. 📺

MAGDALENA BRYK, member of the AZS SGH Management Board

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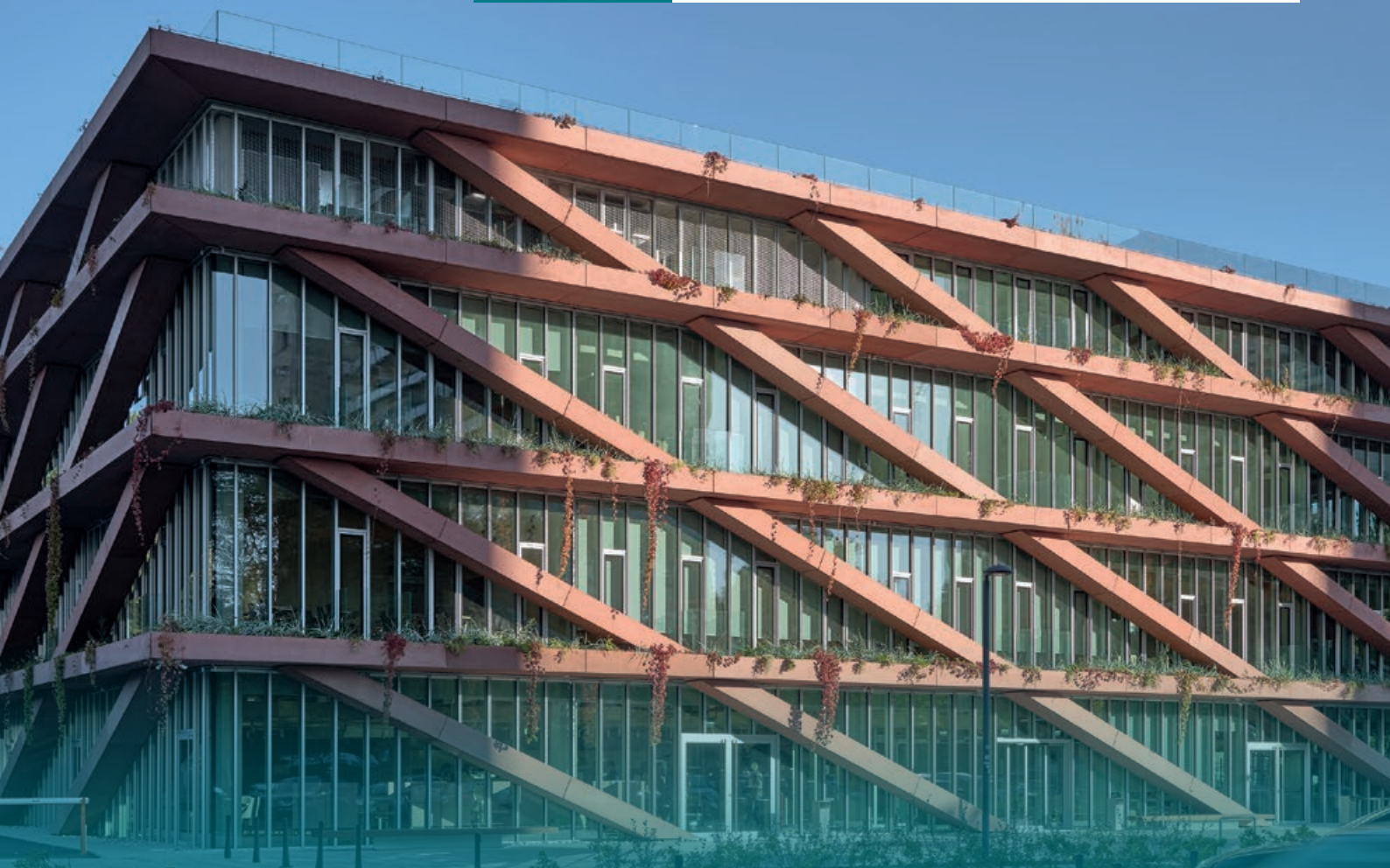
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