



Organizator:

Polskie Towarzystwo Wspierania Przedsiębiorczości SA
ul. Jana Matejki 3
40-077 Katowice
e-mail: eec@eec2009.eu

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Idea

Europe is facing a great political and economic challenge. The political decisions of European Union members defined the way the economy is to be developing on our continent. Community of European countries has decided that striving for competitiveness and efficiency it will take into account the environment needs respecting at the same time the principles of sustainable development.

Consistent and responsible economic policy taking into consideration the interest of the environment, results in, on the one hand, improvement of standard of living and the natural heritage is being preserved for the future generations. On the other hand all accepted restrictions and ambitious requirements strictly connected with climate package – above all with reduction of CO₂ emissions by the industry or bigger share of renewable energy – bring about far-reaching, permanent and almost immediate effects for the economies of the member states, their effectiveness and global competitiveness.

Environment-friendly regulations have particularly serious impact on energy-intensive industries and deeply affect the natural environment. New member states of EU have been subjected to particularly strong pressure with Poland among others. In spite of dynamic transformations of their economies they are still wrestling with their problems of the past. For them, it will be by far more difficult to meet these rigorous settlements than for the developed countries of old European Union.

In this context one may hazard a thesis that the Europeans are in for post-industrial revolution. Noxious to environment and energy-intensive industries will be gradually withdrawn – the manufacturers will transfer their production to fast developing countries of Asia or the Third World among others. The economies of European countries will have to build up their advantage through the development of innovations and the economy based on knowledge – the use of state-of-the-art technologies, interaction of business and science.

Confronted with these imminent transformations a dialog becomes of particular importance. It has to be discussed how the countries of European Union will go through this new transformation and what chief assets might be applied by them to compete with economically dynamic countries of Asia or the New World.

Recently, the echoes of the world's crisis reach both Europe and Poland, and its severe consequences have already been felt by some branches. The firms, regions, and countries are faced with the necessity to adopt their strategies to the new situation, to re-orient their vision of development. In this context, a joint debate on our strong and weak sides, on our place in the world's economics becomes particularly and urgently needed.

We believe that Poland is a good place for such debates – as it is one of the fastest developing countries in Europe. Hence Upper Silesia constitutes a splendid framework for such debate in Poland. It is a region with one of the biggest agglomerations of our continent, an area of a great potential and rich industrial traditions, which effectively modernizes and transforms its economy – however it is still dependent on traditional sources of energy and enters into complex interactions with natural and social environment.

We can easily hazard a thesis that it is here in Silesia that the economic issues and challenges as well as social ones of the united Europe concentrate.

Referring to the idea of Robert Schumann who thought that "The value of Europe is Europe of values" one can dedicate to the economy of the Old Continent the following watchword: „The Greatness of Europe is the Europe of Greatness” In order to make this greatness come true a concrete dialogue and trustworthy co-operation is necessary – after all, we know that we can, as a community, do more together than just alone.

The organizers of European Economic Congress would like to contribute a new quality to this dialogue. This three-day meeting of two thousand most important people for the European economy are bound to create a precious value – this will make it possible for us all to being more aware and with joint forces cope with the challenges of today's world.