Maria Urbaniec*

The 11th Congress of Polish Economists

More than a Century of Economic Congresses

The Congresses of Polish Economists belong to the oldest and most prestigious traditions of Poland's economic community. Their origins date back to 1887, when the First Congress of Economists and Lawyers met in Kraków, bringing together around two hundred participants from all three partitions of a country that was then absent from the political map of Europe. That gathering established a tradition that has endured ever since: at critical moments in the nation's history, economists would come together to assess the present and debate the future direction of both the economy and the discipline.

The modern series of Congresses began in 1950 and has since accompanied every major turning point in Poland's postwar development. The Fifth Congress, organized in 1987, marked the centenary of the tradition and adopted a position paper on the development challenges facing the Polish economy at the close of the twentieth century. The Sixth Congress, held in 1993 under the auspices of the Polish Economic Society, explored how the country's economy might be revitalized amid systemic transformation. The titles of subsequent editions reflected the country's changing circumstances: "Economics in the Era of the Information Society" was held in 2001, "Poland in the Global Economy," held in 2007, was the first Congress convened after Poland's accession to the European Union, "Economics for the Future" was organized in 2013, in the aftermath of the global financial crisis, and "Economists for Development" took place in 2019. Each Congress, as the organizers like to stress, has carried its own *signum temporis*, a distinctive mark of its times. The eleventh edition has brought that lineage into an age defined by geopolitical, technological, and social uncertainty, while the legacy of earlier Congresses gives today's economic debate in Poland a sense of continuity, stature, and strategic dimension.

Debate in Times of Uncertainty

The 11th Congress titled "Economics and the Economy in Times of Uncertainty" met in Poznań at the Poznań Congress Center on the grounds of the Poznań International Fair on December 4–5, 2025. It proved to be the largest nationwide gathering of economists, business leaders, and public decision-makers in Poland with 648 participants registered and around 600 experts representing academia, business, and public institutions taking part in the proceedings. The program comprised more than sixty debates and sessions, including three plenary sessions, twenty-eight panel sessions, and twenty-six scientific (paper) sessions featuring 161 papers by approximately 400 co-authors, complemented by thirty-seven poster presentations. The Congress was supported by twenty-four strategic partners, five institutional partners, fourteen media partners, and twenty partner journals.

The Congress went beyond the mere presentation of data and figures, serving as a forum for in-depth discussions on the key challenges facing contemporary economies. Its substantive program focused on the following four major thematic streams:

- the continuity of development and the search for new paradigms in economic sciences;
- economic regulation in times of uncertainty and turbulence;
- the real economy in an era of fundamental uncertainty and artificial intelligence;
- and economic education for development.

Discussions ranged from macroeconomics and public finance to the future of globalization, the energy transition and climate crisis, international competitiveness of firms and the role of family businesses,

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economic security of households and demographic change, and the place of economic education and methodological pluralism in the discipline. A widely noted highlight was the cross-disciplinary panel "Artificial Intelligence—Beyond the Hype," which drew together specialists from the fields of computer science, economics, neurophysiology, psychology, and ethics.

This year's edition carried particular weight, as it coincided with the 80th anniversary of the Polish Economic Society, an independent, nationwide association of economists founded in Łódź and formally established on 2 December, 1945. The anniversary offered an occasion to take stock of the Society's achievements and its role in the development of Polish economic thought. A commemorative volume edited by Mirosław Bochenek, tracing nearly two and a half centuries of associations and professional organizations that have shaped economic research in Poland, was presented during the celebrations. As part of the program, Prof. Marek Szczepański of Poznań University of Technology received the Society's Prof. Edward Lipiński Award for 2025—one of the most prestigious honors in Poland's economic community.

A commemorative volume *Polskie Towarzystwo Ekonomiczne i instytucje poprzedzające w służbie nauk ekonomicznych* (*The Polish Economic Society and Its Predecessor Institutions in the Service of Economic Science*), edited by Mirosław Bochenek, was also presented during the celebrations. The book offers a concise yet in-depth account of the associations and scientific and professional organizations that, for nearly two and a half centuries, have shaped the development of economic thought and research on the economy in Poland. Documentary in character, the publication is addressed to historians of economic thought, practicing economists, members of the Society and all those interested in the evolution of the economic sciences and the institutional foundations of the economy in Poland. In his foreword, President Marian Gorynia described it as an exceptional event—significant not only for the Society's members but also for the entire economic community in Poland. The volume is available free of charge from the Society's online bookstore at ksiazkiekonomiczne.pte.pl.

Setting the Stage: Voices from the Opening

Opening the proceedings, Prof. Marian Gorynia, President of the Polish Economic Society, set the tone for the debate. He observed that the very word "uncertainty" in the Congress theme captures the turbulence of a civilizational turning point in which economists are at the same time participants, observers, and analysts, and he stressed that the event was conceived as a forum open to the entire community of Polish economists rather than to the Society alone. "It would



be difficult to meaningfully discuss economics without reference to the economy," he noted, "just as it would be impossible to debate on the economy without economics." Above all, he framed the Congress as an exercise in raising economic awareness, based on the conviction that only a society that understands the fundamental mechanisms of the economy can take a responsible part in public life.

Prof. Marian Gorynia (Polish Economic Society):

- *On the Congress theme: "The theme, the guiding idea of the Congress is: 'Economics and the Economy in Times of Uncertainty'. (...) The term 'uncertainty' (...) embodies the turbulence characteristic of the civilizational turning point in which we are participants, observers, researchers, and analysts."*
- *On theory and practice: "It would be difficult to discuss economics without reference to the economy, just as it would be impossible to debate on the economy without economics."*
- *On the role of economists: "This is a Congress of Polish Economists, not a Congress of the Polish Economic Society. (...) We see ourselves as convening a forum for all economists—for the entire community of Polish economists."*
- *On economic awareness: "...only a society that understands the fundamental mechanisms of the economy can participate responsibly in public life."*
- *On looking ahead: "...to look to the future with both courage and humility."*

Among the opening speakers, Prof. Marcin Piątkowski (World Bank; Kozminski University) struck a notably optimistic note, describing Poland as living through its "economic Golden Age." He argued that the country should now move forward from being a "champion of catching up" to becoming a "champion of leading," and proposed a development strategy built on five pillars—efficient institutions, investment in human capital, innovation, intelligent migration, and inclusiveness.

Prof. Marcin Piątkowski (World Bank; Kozminski University):

- On the "Golden Age": *"Poland is experiencing its economic Golden Age—a period of the fastest growth in Europe* (...). *Never before have we been so close, and so quickly."*
- On catching up vs. leading: *"Over the past three decades, Poland has been a 'champion of catching up'. However,* (...) *we must become a 'champion of leading'."*
- On the "5i" model: *"Institutions that are efficient and transparent; investment, particularly in human capital; innovation as the engine of growth; intelligent migration aligned with demographic needs; and inclusiveness..."*
- On bold goals (Michelangelo): *"The greater danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we reach it.*
- On education and innovation: *"...we must significantly increase expenditure on research and development and create an ecosystem in which innovation is rewarded rather than constrained."*

Krzysztof Domarecki, founder of the Selena Group, offered a complementary business perspective and called for a decisive shift from a low-cost production model toward a high-value-added one based on innovation. He also identified demography, energy costs, the ownership structure of firms, and the culture of entrepreneurship as the four challenges that will determine the further growth of the Polish economy.

- On the scale of success: *"...having reached a GDP level of one trillion dollars, we are facing an entirely new challenge—doubling the size of our economy."*
- On growth constraints: *"Poland's further growth will depend on how effectively we address four fundamental challenges: demography, energy costs, the ownership structure of our firms, and the culture of entrepreneurship."*
- On the need for boldness: *"Polish companies must move beyond the role of subcontractors and become technological leaders within their respective niches."*
- On the energy transition: *"Without access to affordable and clean energy, Polish industry will not be able to maintain its position in global markets."*

Hosts and regional leaders underlined the local dimension of the debate. Jacek Jaśkowiak, the Mayor of Poznań, reminded the participants that "Poznań owes its success to dialogue," and that the financial stability of local governments is a cornerstone of the stability of the whole state, while Wojciech Jankowiak, Vice-Marshal of the Wielkopolska Region, stressed that without giving priority to science and technology, and without closer cooperation between academia and business, the country will have to struggle to meet the challenges ahead.

Jacek Jaśkowiak (Mayor of Poznań):

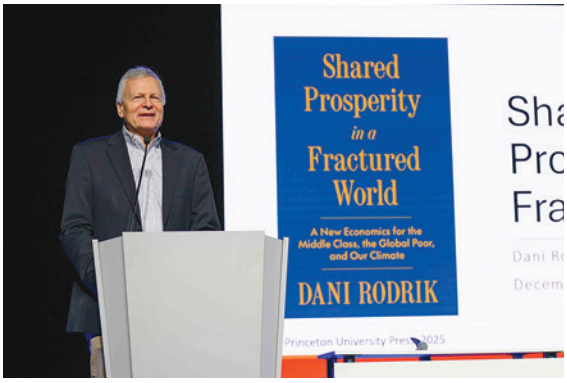
- On Poznań's tradition: *"It is here that the spirit of entrepreneurship meets academic tradition, creating ideal conditions for a debate on the future of the Polish economy."*
- On economists in governance: *"In times of uncertainty and rapid change, we, local authorities, need sound economic knowledge."*
- On cooperation: *"Poznań owes its success to dialogue. A strong region cannot exist without cooperation between academia, business practitioners, and public administration."*
- On uncertainty: *"The financial stability of local governments is a cornerstone of the stability of the whole state."*

Wojciech Jankowiak (Vice-Marshal of the Wielkopolska Region):

- On science and technology: *"Today, if we fail to make technology and science our priority, if our universities are unable to compete with the world's leading institutions, we will not be able to overcome the challenges that lie ahead."*
- On the Congress's role: a forum that *"brings together regional policy analysis, local government experience, and the scientific potential of the country."*

Keynote Perspectives: Voices That Shaped the Debate

The keynote address by Prof. Dani Rodrik of Harvard University, "Shared Prosperity in a Fractured World," became one of the pivotal moments of the Congress. Describing Poland's growth as "truly remarkable," he attributed it to a combination of rapid economic catch-up and integration into Western European supply chains, underpinned by a deep institutional transformation—promoting the rule of law, democracy, and new norms—enabled by the prospect, and then the reality, of EU membership. Contrasting Poland with Mexico, Prof. D. Rodrik argued that trade and integration into supply chains are not sufficient on their own. Looking ahead, he cautioned that the era of catching up is drawing to a close: operating at the technological frontier is more demanding, growth will be slower, and economic success should increasingly be judged by whether it delivers good, productive jobs and security for the middle class rather than by aggregate figures alone.



Prof. Dani Rodrik (keynote: "Shared Prosperity in a Fractured World"):

- On Poland's success: *"The growth experienced by Poland has been truly remarkable.* (...) *a combination of two factors: the ability to generate very rapid economic catch-up* (...) *and integration into Western European supply chains."*
- On institutions and the EU: *"There was a significant institutional transformation, initially enabled by the prospect of accession to the European Union and subsequently by membership itself. The rule of law, democracy, new norms* (...) *were key."*
- On Poland vs. Mexico: *"I often compare Poland to Mexico.* (...) *trade and integration into supply chains are not sufficient on their own. What proved crucial was institutional transformation..."*
- On the end of the catch-up era: *"This is no longer a process of catching up. Operating at the technological frontier is more demanding, so economic growth will be lower and trade will play a more limited role."*
- On middle-class security: *"We should assess our economic performance more in terms of whether we are creating good, productive jobs for the middle class and ensuring economic security, rather than focusing solely on aggregate growth or trade volumes."*
- On services: *"We need to devote much greater attention to making the services sector significantly more productive."*

Prof. Beata Javorcik, Chief Economist of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and a professor at the University of Oxford, devoted her keynote, "Globalization in Times of Turbulence," to the retreat from hyper-globalization and the effectiveness of economic sanctions. She recalled that, three weeks after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, the overwhelming majority of economists expected sanctions to push Russia into a deep recession—a forecast that did not materialize—and she argued that the profession had underestimated how sanctioned goods can be rerouted through third countries and how voluntary corporate withdrawals act as an additional, self-imposed tariff. Prof. B. Javorcik's conclusion was that contemporary economics must reckon not only with hard trade data but also with geopolitics, reputational costs, and the complex web of linkages across third countries.



Prof. Beata Javorcik (keynote: "Globalization in Times of Turbulence"):

- On the retreat from globalization: *"After decades of hyper-globalization, we are now witnessing a reversal—a turning away from globalization."*
- On economists' forecasts: *"Three weeks after the outbreak of the war, 90 percent of economists* (...) *believed that sanctions would lead to a deep recession in Russia. Today we know that this did not materialize."*
- On circumvention via neighbors: *"We observe a very strong increase in European exports to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Armenia* (...). *Sanctioned goods often 'fall off the truck' en route..."*
- On the "price of values": *"Private sanctions* (...) *have reinforced the effect of official measures. This 'price of values' is equivalent to an additional tariff ranging between 10 and 60 percent."*
- On Turkish/neutral firms: *"Turkish exporters increased their margins by an average of around 4 percent, filling the gap left by Western competitors."*
- On the yuan: *"In 2023, more than one-third of Russia's imports were invoiced in yuan; two years earlier, the figure was only 4 percent."*
- On re-entry after sanctions: *"...once sanctions are lifted, firms take on average around a decade to return to a given market."*

The Congress Program

The Congress program comprised over 60 plenary, panel, paper, and poster sessions and attracted altogether more than 600 experts representing the academic, business, and institutional communities. The discussions focused on the following key thematic areas:

- Macroeconomics and finance—issues of public finance sustainability, financial system stability, and the debate on the potential adoption of the euro.
- Global challenges—questions related to geopolitics, the future of globalization, the energy transition, and the consequences of the climate crisis.
- Economy and business—international competitiveness of firms, the functioning of global supply chains, ESG strategies, the role of family businesses, and application of AI in the economy.
- Society—economic security of households, labor market developments, demographic challenges, and socio-economic inequalities.
- Science and education—the role of economic universities in shaping public debate, the importance of pluralism in economics, and the promotion of economic education throughout society.

The Congress program was structured around the following four main thematic streams:

1. Economic Sciences: Continuity of Development and the Search for New Paradigms.
2. Economic Regulation in Times of Uncertainty and Turbulence.
3. The Real Economy in an Era of Fundamental Uncertainty and Artificial Intelligence.
4. Economic Education for Development.

The Honorary Patronage of the 11th Congress of Polish Economists was provided by the President of the Republic of Poland, Karol Nawrocki.

The Poznań Declaration and the Road Ahead

The collective position of the Congress was articulated in the Poznań Declaration, adopted at the close of the proceedings by more than six hundred representatives of the economic community. The Declaration synthesizes the principal conclusions of the debates and sets out directions for action addressed to policymakers, academia, and the business sector. Its central message is a call to rebuild trust in public institutions, to strengthen the role of science in shaping economic policy, and to restore the concept of the social market economy—enshrined in Article 20 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland—as the foundation for the country's long-term and sustainable development. The document is framed as an invitation to cooperation among academia, public administration, business, civil society organizations and the media, with the aim of building a modern, competitive, and socially inclusive economy.

The Declaration sets out eleven postulates:

1. Building trust in institutions and strengthening the social market economy.
2. Developing a long-term strategy for Poland's economic development.
3. Ensuring security.
4. Responding effectively to demographic challenges.
5. Strengthening the stability of public finances and fiscal responsibility.
6. Supporting a responsible green transition.
7. Promoting and implementing the principles of an economy of moderation.
8. Accelerating digital transformation.
9. Supporting entrepreneurship and innovation as pillars of a resilient economy.
10. Advancing economic education and future-oriented skills.
11. Fostering an open, knowledge-based debate on Poland's role in the European Union.

Taken together, the 11th Congress of Polish Economists—enriched with the celebration of the 80th anniversary of the Polish Economic Society—serves as a significant milestone for nurturing both the community of economists and the broader economic debate in Poland. It demonstrated that even in times of uncertainty, constructive reflection and cooperation in the pursuit of stable, sustainable, and equitable development remain possible; it also reaffirmed the Congress as a key forum where academic, business, and public perspectives meet with the country's future in mind.

Further information, the post-Congress report, and recordings of the sessions are available at https://kongres2025.pte.pl.



The 11th Congress of Polish Economists. Congress Report, https://kongres2025.pte.pl/relacje-z-kongresu/.