

PATRONS OF THE PEARLS OF THE POLISH ECONOMY GALA

Poland is not just a country of unquestioned economic successes, which is confirmed by all international rankings, but also a country with rich cultural, intellectual, tourist and other resources. It has a great potential for sustainable social and economic development. Proof of Poland's development potential is the progress it has made in the three decades of transition from communism to the market economy. Yet Poland's strengths and achievements are not generally known on the international arena. This often means that Poland is not appreciated as much as it should. Even at home, many ordinary Polish citizens tend to play down their country's role and achievements. This national trait was captured by poet and geographer Wincenty Pol (1807-1872) who wrote "You glorify the foreign, but you do not know your own." Roughly at the same time, the Polish national poet Juliusz Słowacki (1809-1849) thus described his country: "You used to be a peacock among nations and a parrot, and now you are another's maid." Polish people could do well to remember these two quotes not to waste the nation's potential, notably its most valuable intellectual potential. At present, Poland has every chance of overcoming old stereotypes. For a lasting and harmonious social and economic development to occur, it is essential to apply the right kind of methods to tap society's potential. That is why it is vital to adopt a holistic approach, to create synergies and to reconcile economic growth, social progress and environmental protection. The Polish Market's "Pearls of the Polish Economy" project has been focused on such symbiosis for over two decades. It is a holistic project which covers all the most important areas of public and economic life. It is focused on identifying, publicising and promoting outstanding individual and institutional achievements in Poland and abroad - not just economic achievements, but also achievements in the sphere of science, culture, art, politics and in other spheres. "Pearls of the Polish Economy" is a commendable undertaking which opens the way for international co-operation. This is facilitated by the English-language Polish Market magazine, which is addressed to the most important institutions focused on Polish affairs, including embassies, consulates, Polish cultural centres etc. It helps mobilise the capital and intellectual potential of the Polish diaspora, which is estimated at approximately 20 million. Regrettably, no government or local government body has paid due attention to it. As a result, various opportunities for co-operation, including capital ventures, have been lost, particularly in terms of social capital, which is so important for social and economic development. Projects undertaken by Polish Market, such as the "Pearls of the Polish Economy," could make a change in this respect, because they are holistic. "Pearls of the Polish Economy" is a celebration of Polish talent in science, education and culture. Thanks to its scope, comprehensive nature and holistic approach, its importance can hardly be overestimated. Polish poet Julian Tuwim (1894-1953) once called on his countrymen to try to get the big picture, instead of needlessly focusing on details:

"And here they come, all buttoned up
They look to the right, they look to the left.
They see everything separately
That house ... that boy ... that horse ... that tree."

The "Pearls of the Polish Economy" allow you to see both individual details and the big picture, they bring out individual merits and achievements of those who have been honoured with the award. It is my wish that this undertaking should last forever, because it serves everyone so well. Those behind the initiative deserve our heartiest congratulations and gratitude. •



PROFESSOR ELŻBIETA MACZYŃSKA,

President of the Polish Economic Society,
winner of the Honorary Pearl in the Science
category in 2017.