

Introduction

In market economy conditions the primary purpose of business activity is the strive for the most effective use of existing resources and the changing conditions for the creation of internal and attraction of external growth factors. This entails the need to stimulate and strengthen entrepreneurial attitudes of the society, as well as developing educational activities that allow for the increase in aspirations of the population and for the development of human and social capital. This is due to the fact that in development processes, the primary role is attributed to entrepreneurs who conduct their businesses with the aim of achieving certain economic benefits with a particular risk taken. Business entities operate and develop in changing market conditions and the growing technological progress enables them to offer increasingly competitive products. However, this requires the implementation of more and more effective and efficient technical, organisational and institutional structures.

The size of the technical-economic potential and the level of the modernness of enterprises carrying out production or service activities are the principal factors of social, economic, and cultural development of spatial systems of different scale. Of great importance in this regard is also the quality of the society and the authorities of local, regional, national, and European systems. Their main task should be to create favourable conditions for market and institutional environment for the creation and intensification of reasonable directions of the development of economic activity. This facilitates the achievement of the main objective, which should be the strive for systematic increase in the standard of living and the quality of life of the people.

In shaping this process, the primary role belongs to the properly prepared man with strong moral values and entrepreneurial character traits who is capable of setting and realising the most profitable goals for development of enterprises and spatial systems in the area where the economic activity is undertaken.

The issues undertaken in the present volume refer to the very topic. Included are research works currently developed in national and foreign academic centres. They focus on four main issues, i.e.: the role of entrepreneurship in the development of regional and local systems, enterprises, institutions and tourism activities, as well as the issue of entrepreneurship in school and university education.

Theoretical considerations on the impact of entrepreneurship on the formation of regional systems, the role of entrepreneurship in balancing the socio-economic development, and methods of measuring the level of innovation of regions introduce the topic of the role of entrepreneurship in the development of regional and local systems. It was assumed that the reasonable shaping of the socio-economic and cultural structures of different scales of spatial systems requires an increasingly detailed analysis on the functional structure of business entities and institutions, as well as determining the conditions of their transformations and relations between them and their environment. They allow for the learning of the changing conditions and purposes of economic activity which for the most part, in properly prepared institutional environment, can increase or reduce

the opportunities for entrepreneurship development. This is indicated by an attempt at model approach to conditions of business activities that applies to: principles of their location and development in regional structures, their functions, internal active and passive relations between them, as well as the relationship with the environment. Indicated here were the basic elements of regional structure, their functions, relationships, competitive market areas, objectives of the socio-economic policy, and the quality of the elites and legal instruments. Examples of the impact of entrepreneurship on development prospects of the Małopolskie voivodeship, selected municipalities, and projects of revitalisation of Upper Silesia and one of the districts of Naples all refer to this issue.

When analysing the influence of entrepreneurship on the development of services activity emphasis was put on the topic of international entrepreneurship, the behaviour of small and medium-sized companies, developing automotive services, and the importance of costs calculation and economic information bureaus in development of their activities.

Following are empirical examples of the influence of entrepreneurship on the development of tourism activities: in Slovakia (Banská Bystrica, Žilina), in Italy (Pistoia), and in Poland (Camino de Santiago in the country), including the Podkarpackie and Małopolskie voivodeships, city tourism of students of the Visegrad countries, and motives for studying tourism and recreation.

In order to intensify the economic, social, and cultural development of the country, regions, and local systems it is crucial to take into consideration the issue of shaping entrepreneurial attitudes and the strive for the proper preparation of personnel. It was assumed that the starting point should be the shaping of entrepreneurial attitudes as early as school education. This issue is presented in the context of a new curriculum of entrepreneurship education from pre-school, through primary, to secondary school. Next, the results of studies on the entrepreneurial competence and educational models in selected countries were discussed. Notes from school practice presenting examples of papers in the field of entrepreneurship written by high school students complement the discussed topic.

We hope that, in addition to developing research concepts and attempting at more and more accurate recognition of the complex role of entrepreneurship in socio-economic and cultural development of spatial systems, various papers presented will be used to application activities in terms of determining reasonable aims of building and improving entrepreneurship strategies, as well as making decisions concerning the management of said processes.

In reference to contemporary civilisation development trends and the need for accelerating socio-economic and cultural development, as well as efforts to equal the disparities in this regard (in European, national, regional, and local space), of growing importance proves to be the development of entrepreneurship as a basic factor for raising the competitiveness of business activity and an increase in the level and quality of life of the society. Thus, we encourage the authors and readers to undertake theoretical, model, and empirical research which will contribute to the more and more accurate recognition of this extremely complex and topical issue. This way, we would like to contribute to the intensification of development processes of the country, regional and local systems, bearing in mind the strive for raising their competitiveness and acceleration of raising the level and quality of life of the society.