

СОЦІОЛОГІЧНІ ЗАХОДИ ТА ВИДАННЯ: РЕЦЕНЗІЇ. ВІДГУКИ

PAULINA KUZIOR

PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND OTHER ASPECTS OF HUMAN ACTIVITY IN THE DISCUSSIONS AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF BUSINESS ETHICS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Rybnik – a picturesque town situated in the Silesian District (Poland), is one of the major cities of Upper Silesia. Historical references to Rybnik come from the thirteenth century. Currently, the city is growing rapidly, attracting the young people who can study in Rybnik at two universities. Conditions for studying are excellent. Here, on the academic campus in Rybnik on 31 May 2016, was held an International Congress of Business Ethics and Sustainable Development. The initiators of the Congress were prof. *Aleksandra Kuzior*, president of the Silesian Centre for Business Ethics and Sustainable Development, acting at the Silesian University of Technology, and *Piotr Kuczera*, president of the City of Rybnik. Polish, Austrian, German, Slovak and Ukrainian scientists, businessmen and representatives of local authorities met at the Congress to share experiences, ideas and best practices in achieving the objectives of the concept of sustainable development and corporate social responsibility (CSR). The Honorary Patronage over the Congress was taken by the Ministry of Development of the Republic of Poland, and in the Scientific Committee there were outstanding representatives of Polish and foreign science, dealing with issues of sustainable development and business ethics (detailed information on the website >> [<<](http://www.polsl.pl/organizacje/scebizr/Strony/witamy.aspx)).

Among the prominent representatives of Polish science and policy, his message to the participants of the Congress gave prof. *Jerzy Buzek*, MEP, Chairman of the European Parliament in 2009-2012 and the Polish Prime Minister in 1997-2001, who pointed out that sustainable development will depend on the enthusiasm, perseverance and integrating the activities of different actors: business people, scientists, leaders different organizations, but also of all employees and ordinary people. As a member and chairman of various committees of the European Union (Chairman of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy and the Conference of Committee Chairs of the European Parliament), he drew attention to the importance and topicality of the issues undertaken during the Congress in Rybnik. Prof. *Bogusław Łazarz*, the Vice-Rector elect of Silesian University of Technology, stressed that there is no sustainable development without adequate basis for ethics and ethical values and the Honorary Consul of the Republic of Croatia and President of the Chamber of Commerce

and Trade of the Rybnik Industrial District at once also drew attention to the importance of ethical behavior in business, and Congress is an excellent forum where businessmen can discuss with scientists problems bothering them. Passing the wishes of fruitful deliberations, the Ambassador of the Republic of Croatia Andrei Bekić also drew attention to the frequent contacts of the embassy with the city of Rybnik, which opens up possibilities of cooperation. It should be emphasized that the city of Rybnik cooperated and is already working with many partner cities from different countries. We can point out here among others, Dorsten and Eurasburg (Germany), Karviná (Czech Republic), Ivano-Frankivsk and Bar (Ukraine), Larissa (Greece), Liévin, Mazamet and Saint-Vallier (France), Newtownabbey (United Kingdom). Rybnik is a city of a rapidly growing economy, science and tourism, the city where the cooperation of local government and business with universities grows, and a perfect example of that was the International Congress of Business Ethics and Sustainable Development.

A plenary lecture was delivered by Prof. *Gerhard Banse*, president of the Leibniz Society Berlin and a representative of the Berliner Zentrum Technik und Kultur, a longtime researcher at Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, dealing with issues of sustainable development, philosophy and ethics of technology and technology assessment.

Within the Congress there were also held two panel discussions: 1. “How governments can support ethical business”; 2. “CSR – between theory and practice” and at the thematic sections there were delivered nearly 40 papers.

The first panel discussion was attended by prof. *Heinrich Badura* of the Austrian Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Wirtschaft, *Katarzyna Dzióba*, Vice-Mayor of Zabrze city, *Mieczysław Kieca*, Mayor of the city Wodzisław Śląski, and *Piotr Kuczera*, Mayor of Rybnik. The discussion was moderated by prof. *Aleksandra Kuzior*. The second one was participated by prof. *Michael Aßländer* (Technische Universität Dresden, Internationales Hochschulinstitut Zittau, member of the Executive Committee of EBEN, Germany), *Paulina Bednarz* (director for EU projects and communication of the Institute for Research on Democracy and Private Enterprise, The Foundation of the National Chamber of Commerce, Poland), Dr. Eng. *Janusz Karwot* (President of the Water and Sewage Company LLC in Rybnik, Poland) and prof. *Alla Lobanova* (Krivoy Rog National University, Ukraine).

Lectures in thematic sections were devoted to the issues in the area of normative ethics, applied ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and the various aspects of sustainable development. There were presented, among others, research on the ethical dimension of CSR, the role of social responsibility in building the relationship between science and business, the development of innovative projects within the economics of sharing and management responsibility, etc. The speakers wondered whether Corporate Social Responsibility is a requirement or just fashion, and whether the ethical behavior of firms are only decoy social responsibility and real commitment. Representatives of companies operating not only on the local, but also international market, gave examples of good practices, particularly in the areas of human resource management and or-

ganizational responsibilities towards the environment and pro-environmental actions. Examples of ecological activities are also presented in a panel discussion, for which the city Wodzislaw Slaski received a certificate of “Ecological Commune” for supporting modern and ecological solutions for heating in the city.

In the afternoon sessions in several papers there were also themes showing the role of women in business development. They also presented examples of discriminatory practices and harassment that arise in the practice of corporate governance and with whom it is essential to fight. The basic documents of the concept of sustainable development highlight the important role of women in creating an ethical business and the implementation of the objectives of sustainable development. Direct examples of such records can be found, among others, in the Global Programme of Action Agenda 21, the Plan of Implementation of Johannesburg or in the “Future We Want” report.

Considerable interest has aroused discussion on CSR. Panelists from three different European countries, with varying degrees of implementation of the objectives of CSR, drew attention to, inter alia, the creation of a CSR strategy, commitment to solving the problems of local communities, investing in eco-innovation. The examples showed significant differences in the approach to CSR in Poland, Germany and Ukraine.

Foreign visitors who took part in the discussion (prof. A. Lobanova and prof. M. Asslaender) are scientists who have been working for many years with the Department of Applied Social Sciences of the Faculty of Organization and Management Silesian University of Technology. Department of Sociology and Economics of the Krivoy Rog National University in Ukraine, together with the Department of Applied Social Sciences implement a training project, the result of which is being prepared for printing as an academic book “Selected issues of the sociology of work”, whose authors are Polish and Ukrainian scientists. A look at the problems of the sociology of work from two different perspectives yielded very interesting results. At the same time Department of Applied Social Sciences cooperates with Technische Universität Dresden, Internationales Hochschulinstitut Zittau, by organizing annually a conference on “Social development towards values. Ethics – Technology – Society, which also involves researchers from Ukraine. The co-organizer of this project is the Department of Ethics and Applied Ethics of Matej Bel University in Banska Bystrica. International scientific cooperation is focused on the sociological and ethical issues. An important element of this cooperation are also the issues discussed at the International Congress of Business Ethics and Sustainable Development in Rybnik, hence the presence of scientists from these countries at a meeting of the congress. So then Congress concentrated scientific, business, managerial and government environment from different countries. The Congress was also attended by students of secondary schools in Rybnik, who also joined the discussions. The organizers of the Congress – Silesian Center for Business Ethics and Sustainable Development and the City of Rybnik – announced further cooperation and preparing the next edition of the Congress.