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Narodowy Bank Polski

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The report on the debate **“Fine Arts and Humanities as Innovative Capital”**
which took place on the 19th of November 2009 at the seat of Polish Economic Society
in Warsaw at Nowy Świat 49

The introduction to the debate was made by:

Jan Kozłowski, Ph.D. – the Department of Strategy at the Ministry of Science and Higher Education

Jan Szomburg Jr. – the Gdansk Institute for Market Economics

Alek Tarkowski, Ph.D. – the Interdisciplinary Centre for Mathematical and Computational Modelling (ICM), the Team of Strategic Advisers to the Prime Minister

Commentary:

Prof. Urszula Grzełońska – the Warsaw School of Economics

Prof. Tadeusz Baczko – the Institute of Economic Sciences, Polish Academy of Sciences (INE PAN)

The debate was chaired by: Prof. Elżbieta Mączyńska – President of the Polish Economic Society

The objective of the debate was to find relations between broadly defined culture and science, primarily economics. It was also meant to demonstrate the impact of culture on economic effects or more extensively, on socio-economic development.

J. Kozłowski provided evidence that the humanities and culture produced visions that stimulated designers or other creators to realise their imaginations. The science and technology provided instruments for fulfilment of dreams. There are strong relations between music, architecture, arts, aesthetic sensitivity, philosophy and practice of the everyday life. Many creators (e.g. A. Einstein) point to strong influence of literature on their artistic

achievements in many fields. The influence of the humanities on creativity and innovation is particularly noticeable.

J. Szomburg indicated the increasing competition in the market of new technologies and the growing share of China in total R&D expenditure. The length of the new technology diffusion cycle has shortened dramatically. Consumption has changed significantly since the world is departing from the present civilisation of objects into civilisation of immaterial values. This is not a matter of growing importance of licenses and patents in corporations' assets but broadly defined cultural values. We shall be increasingly often purchasing products not because of their material values but due to such values as a sense of belonging to the group or self-esteem. The role of new technologies in sustaining competitive advantage is decreasing. It is expected that existing technologies will adapt to specific preferences of entities, groups or whole society.

A. Tarkowski points to the alarming fact that creators of culture separate themselves from reality under banners of its autonomy. The traditional humanities are no longer capable of creating reality. The class that has been in the avant-garde of creating reality is changing. The most interesting cultural values are being created by industrial, graphic, and web designers, architects etc. The democratisation of production is becoming more and more popular (for example Wikipedia). The Poles are creative but are unable to co-operate. There are no educational programmes promoting creativity in Poland. There is a need for new institutions promoting creativity.

Prof. U. Grzelońska, when asked to comment on these addresses said that the beauty is an economic value but economists keep asking her how much the beauty is worth and how much it costs. She put forward a question, why everybody has to subsidise culture and at the same time she justified the need to develop culture. She also pointed to economic effects of culture. The cultural vitality promotes entrepreneurship, innovation or broadly defined intellectual revival. The people want to have a rich cultural life which supports their work.

Prof. T. Baczko gave his comments mainly on the impact of innovation on the socio-economic development. He sees the problem in transfer of technology, in the information gap between scientists and businessmen (the asymmetry of information). The young people tend to co-operate much better. The role of innovation in the public sector is increasing and the sector is becoming increasingly more advanced and needs innovation.

The introduction covered a number of topics and was followed by an interesting discussion in which 7 discussants took part. It was noted that financial outlays on culture in Poland are embarrassingly low. The per capita EU assistance for Poland is also lower than in other new EU member countries. But the money is not the only problem. The ability to evaluate or to measure effects is even more important. Such ability allows to take deliberate decisions in regard to project financing. Participation of consumers in creating, shaping and modelling new products is also important. The discussants appreciated the importance of co-operation which at present is declarative in character, actually everybody wants to have his or her „own private retreat”. The lack of co-operation results in low outlays on research, limited foreign co-operation etc. There is a need to speed up works on such wealth indexes, that would take into account the goods of culture.