

**HALF A CENTURY OF COOPERATION
AND FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN
THE DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS,
UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS, PRAGUE,
AND WROCLAW UNIVERSITY
OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS**

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In 2020 the Department of Statistics of Wrocław University of Economics and Business (hereinafter abbreviated as WUEB) celebrated 70 years of its existence, while its Prague colleague is only two years younger. Both departments have been united for more than 50 years by mutual cooperation and friendship.

The beginning of these contacts dates back to the late 1960s and is associated with two outstanding colleagues who witnessed the birth of this collaboration, namely Professor Zdzisław Henryk Hellwig (1925-2013) and Professor Josef Kozák (1931-2005). The friendship of these two personages and their professional cooperation created a solid foundation of contacts that still exist and which were gradually transferred to generations

of other colleagues. The long-serving dean, Professor Władysław Bukie-tyński (1928-1996), and a number of other outstanding Wrocław statisticians also took part in the cooperation between the two departments.

Since the 1970s, statisticians from Prague and Wrocław have met almost every year at various scientific conferences in Wrocław, Prague and elsewhere. The result of their cooperation was, among other things, the publication of several scientific proceedings in English (two in Prague, two in Wrocław), focusing mainly on the analysis of economic time series and prognostic methods. Individual articles in Polish and Czech professional journals were also published regularly. Thanks to Professor Hellwig, Professor Kozák was able to establish cooperation with the department of statistics at the West German Philipps University of Marburg.

Professor Hellwig, Professor Bukie-tyński and other collaborators visited Prague, during which an agreement was signed between the University of Economics, Prague (hereinafter abbreviated as UEP) and the WUEB on cooperation in the years 1987-1990 in the area of methods of analysis and forecasting of macroeconomic indicators. In the early 1990s, the Prague Department of Statistics also received an internal UEP research grant, to which Professor Hellwig contributed with his methodological and practical experience.

Professor Hellwig's undeniable merits in the development of Czech-Polish scientific cooperation were praised by UEP and he was awarded the honorary title of Doctor honoris causa in 1994. At that time, peer visits, joint studies and exchanges of experience became a regular part of academic life, in which also participated Professor Kozák, the long-time head of the Department of Statistics, Professor Cyhelský (1929-2018), Associate Professor Jiří Žvábek (1943-2015), Associate Professor Jiří Trešl (1947-2011), Associate Professor Dagmar Blatná and the authors of this article.

Four years after the awarding of the honorary title to Professor Hellwig, an agreement was concluded between the UEP and WUEB. Its preamble states that: "Both universities (...) agree to enter into a contract of cooperation. The goal of such cooperation is the preparation and realization of joint projects in the fields of science, research, publication activities and study programs. The agreement is based on the successful results and long-term experience of previous cooperation between the two institutions (most of all between the Departments of Statistics), in the framework of which were created several joint editorial projects, visits, and expert affiliations, as well as the bestowal of an honorary doctorate from the University of Economics, Prague, upon Professor Hellwig of Wrocław, an internationally regarded expert in the field of statistics and econometrics".

The agreement was signed in Prague on November 17, 1998 by the rectors of both universities, Professor Jan Seger and Professor Andrzej Baborski (1936-2001). The agreement was a confirmation of the long-term contacts between the two institutions and at the same time became the basis for the development of this cooperation, which continues to this day.

Another milestone in contacts was the year 2000. The first AMSE conference (then still called Mathematics, Statistics and Informatics in Economy) took place in Liptovský Trnovec on September 3-5, 1998. It was a joint project of UEP and the Slovak Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica (hereinafter abbreviated as MBU). The next conference – already under its current name, Applications of Mathematics and Statistics in Economy (AMSE) – also took place there in 1999. In 2000, for the first time (in Poprad, Slovakia) our Polish friends from Wrocław also took part in the conference. The first Polish participants were led by the then head of the department, Professor Walenty Ostasiewicz, who significantly, and not only with this step, has contributed to the further development of our cooperation.

Since then the Prague, Wrocław and Banská Bystrica Departments of Statistics have been involved in the development and success of this international conference. It is worth mentioning that all three departments of the above-mentioned universities have been taking turns regularly since 2000 to organize the AMSE conference. For the first time in the Czech Republic, the AMSE took place in Zadov (September 13-14, 2001), and for the first time in Poland, a year later in the town of Kudowa Zdrój (September 4-7, 2002).

An important meeting of Polish, Czech and Slovak statisticians was the jubilee 20th year of the AMSE conference, which took place in Szklarska Poręba in 2018 under the auspices of the head of the department, Professor Joanna Dębicka and the collaborating scholars. Our Polish colleagues prepared not only an extensive professional program but they also reminded us of the previous nineteen conferences by means of photos, programmes and other archive documents.

This event enabled the participants to recall not only the humble beginnings of the conference and the always prevailing warm and open friendly atmosphere, but also to remember those participants who are no longer with us – Professor Miroslav Abrahám (1931-2007), Professor Urszula Siedlecka (1941-2004), Doktor Ludwik Adamczyk (1950-2003), Professor Ilja Novák (1927-2009), Professor Josef Kozák, Associate Professor Jiří Trešl (1947-2011), Associate Professor Felix Koschin (1946-2009) and Professor Jaroslav Jílek (1931-2007). The loyal service diplomas were awarded to the AMSE Conference founders and to all who took part in all previous twenty conferences (Professor Richard Hindls, Professor Stanislava Hronová from the UEP and also to Professor Rudolf Zimka and Eng. Peter Laco from the MBU).

To recap, below are the dates and venues of the previous twenty AMSE conferences:

Year	Date	Place	Organizer
1998	3-4 Sept	Liptovský Trnovec	MBU
1999	2-3 Sept	Liptovský Trnovec	MBU
2000	31st Aug-Sept	Poprad	MBU
2001	13-14 Sept	Zadov	UEP
2002	4-7 Sept	Kudowa Zdrój	WUEB
2003	4-5 Sept	Banská Bystrica	MBU
2004	3-4 Sept	České Budějovice	UEP
2005	1-2 Sept	Wrocław	WUEB
2006	31 Aug-1 Sept	Trutnov	UEP
2007	29th Aug-1 Sept	Poprad	MBU
2008	27-29 Aug	Wisła	WUEB
2009	27-28 Aug	Uherské Hradiště	UEP
2010	25-29 Aug	Demänovská Dolina	MBU
2011	31 Aug-3 Sept	Łądek Zdrój	WUEB
2012	30-31 Aug	Liberec	UEP
2013	28Aug-1 Sept	Gerlachov	MBU
2014	27-31 Aug	Jerzmanowice	WUEB
2015	2-6 Sept	Jindřichův Hradec	UEP
2016	31 Aug-4 Sept	Banská Štiavnica	MBU
2017	30 Aug-3 Sept	Szklarska Poręba	WUEB
2018	29 Aug-2 Sept	Kutná Hora	UEP
2019	28 Aug-1Sept	Nižná	MBU
2020	Cancelled: Covid-19	Wisła	WUEB

AMSE conferences have become a solid core of cooperation, not only of personal contacts, but also an opportunity publishing professional texts, an open place for discussions on substantive problems in statistics, econometrics, mathematics and computer science and on teaching issues at all three universities. Last but not least, the place to strengthen friendships and explore the history of the development of these scientific disciplines in today's Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

The on-going experience of cooperation and the current activity of young colleagues from partner universities, most of whom were not even born at the time of establishing these contacts, are a guarantee this cooperation will continue in the future. The step made by Professor Hellwig and Professor Kozák half a century ago was right and far-sighted.