

PREFACE

Current processes in the global economy are the preconditions for regional changes, fostering the way for further development in the area of economy, business, logistics and marketing. Globalisation and the processes that it involves determine the position not only of individual countries but also of entire regions of the world in the competitive settings having a global dimension and involving new subject matters for research and analytical approach. Europe in large undergoes constant changes and challenges, stipulated by progressing globalisation and currently by global economic crises (2008-2009), which started in a snow-ball effect by the collapse in the USA financial market. In effect, the connections (in investment, production, trade, and cooperation), not only these of economic nature are intensified and broadened, and the interdependence of national economies is growing. Among the causes determining the development of globalisation, and at the same time being the engine of changes under way, these factors are the most important: progress in science and technology, innovations, international competition, and economic policy in a broad sense, as achieved by individual countries, and by means of which the obstacles to the functioning of markets are eliminated and the integration processes take place.

The processes of globalisation influence the development of countries as well as of regions. It is noticed that the era of globalisation, the role of local frames (local scale) is not diminished; on the contrary, it is higher there, where competitive advantage is being built and sustained, especially on the grounds of business and industry clustering. Businesses and markets grow in importance as competing entities in the turbulent international environment. Some regional developments can discount the advantages delivered by globalisation; others, less capable in attracting national or foreign direct investments, are becoming weaker.

Due to the increasing competition in the business world, the issue of internationalisation has become apparent to most European companies regardless of size and maturity. Companies operating at international markets are continuously reshaping their strategies and altering their international structures to be more efficient and sustainable. Their operating goals are enhanced by opportunities both in the European and global marketplace.

Both globalisation and integration refer to a growing economic interdependence among companies worldwide as witnessed in the increased cross-boarder flows of goods, services, capital, people and know-how. Economic, social and political environment as well as governance structures in the Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries have undergone radical changes that have reformulated a new attractive geographical space for economic activities and business relationships within integrated market environment of the European Union-27.

Strong development of globalisation processes along with the phenomenon of the European integration and regionalisation is characterised by strengthening mutual economic interconnections, which also might pose much risk in the case of global economic-financial crisis. Efforts of the countries, which do not comprise the EU yet, are also targeted to strengthen their connections with the EU, like Turkey, Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Croatia, etc. The opportunity of the EU membership has been opened for the Balkan countries as well. Now, it is extremely important for these countries to perform indispensable structural transformations within their economies, considering their own past experiences and the new ones, gained through the cooperation with EU-27 countries.

As the internationalisation and interlinks between institutions have become a reality it is also could be defined as one of the major trend in higher education. The interdisciplinary approach to institutional economics and governance of universities is also a recent focus of restructuring and reforming institutions of higher education. The internationalisation of higher education institutions comprises different activities, related to students, academic staff and institutional management. Collaboration amongst academic institutions (on national and international levels) is considered to be one of the priorities and integral part of mutual international projects, providing international perspective on beneficial partnership.

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