

“Polish Experiences and Observations During 10 Years Transition Period Indications for the Future!”

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SUMMARY:

The inventive creativity, especially in enterprises and economic organizations, is the principal base for the progress of these organizations, the increase in competitiveness and the improvement of the quality of life for societies and nations. Professional organizations, like SPWiR in Poland, help to encourage all innovative activities, introducing the synergy effect, which is beneficial for innovators and for direct or indirect users of their “products”. During the last 10 years, 1990 and 2000, that area was very significant for Poland. Radical political changes and dynamic economic transformations, based on market performance, caused certain turbulence, presenting positive opportunities and new threats. The problem of protection of inventive and authors' rights took a national and international dimension. The international cooperation is needed. The wide, regional collaboration is necessary, and neighbouring relationships are obligatory. The consideration of mutual short- and long-term benefits for customers, individuals, organizations and countries is obvious. And, therefore, the SPWiR observations of this kind, outgoing from the current time as a starting point, are presented in this elaboration.

The proper Polish and SPWiR -experiences should serve openly to all possible interested parts, including the common interests of many new states formed in last period, and not only those in Europe. Thanks to such conferences, it is possible to develop official and personal relationships that are important for future cooperation and expected results.

INTRODUCTION - What is SPWiR?

SPWiR – Association of Polish Inventors and Rationalizers is an heir of the Association of Polish Inventors established in 1956, which due to the political causes, was dissolved in 1960. Then, in 1980, based on the Solidarity movement in Poland, it was re-established, but with a small change in its name, which included the word “rationalizers”. This word was very popular at that time in Poland and it practically means “innovators”. It also means people whose professional i.e. mind that are directed towards continuous improvement everywhere, in all aspects of human activities and their possible influences. Thus, rationalization means particular small, often technical innovations of a local importance, such as improvements in the machinery operability, decreasing the energy and raw material consumption and increasing quality or process safety, etc. It corresponds mostly with the concept expressed by the Japanese word “Kaizen”, which in English means a “CIP – Continuous Improvement Process”, German denomination “KVP – Kontinuierlicher Verbesserungsprozess” or Spanish determination “PMC – Procesos de la Mejora Continua.”

Just in the 1st year of its functioning at that time, it admitted over **20 thousand (yes!)** new members, [1]. But in December 1981 martial time was introduced in Poland and the Association was initially suspended and 2 years later officially dissolved, for the martial time was different from the treatment that the Polish scientific-technological associations were used to i.e. the open-minded active attitude, joining freethinking creative people.

The present Association “SPWiR” was re-vitalized in 1989, just after the system changed in Poland and oriented the country to democracy and market economy. The actual SPWiR -president was the initiator of this re-vitalization in the 90s and there - establishment of the Association in 80s (20 years ago). Today, in the year 2000, it is possible to say, that the SPWiR -Association of Polish Inventors and Rationalizers is over 44 years old, which is our reason to authentic pride. We can even suggest that we have contributed, at least intellectually, in the development of the international intellectual property and inventiveness movement, finalized 30 years ago with the establishment of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

Up to date, the Association associates over 1500 individual inventors and 185 supporting members (firms, institutes and other entities, mostly small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) of an innovative origin). The main goals of the SPWiR, according to its statute, are:

- inspiration (stimulation) of inventiveness and its development in the country;

- promotion of Polish inventions and innovations in national environments and abroad, in different forms and various methods;
- protection of inventors and innovators rights and interests, sometimes playing the role of specific “trade union” of innovators;
- searching opportunities for implementation and dissemination of innovations and inventions.

The SPWiR is an independent organization, financed from membership fees and this causes certain difficulties. Therefore, occasionally, it uses the support of governmental institutions like KBN - Committee for Scientific Research, Ministry of Economy, Ministry for Environment and Natural Resources, National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management, ATT - Technology Agency, etc., for special projects of innovative or educational nature.

In the aim of better fulfilling the proper tasks, the Association established as well the Office for Trade & Services “PolWiR” and the Assistance Centre for Inventors and Rationalizers “WiR -Pol” with its regional branches. Both structures help in answering all questions of individuals, groups or small units in the private and state-owned sector, intending to solve professional and human problems, even those including very specific conflicts, protecting their rights and interests, as well as searching the new possibilities, which are advantageous for interested parts.

Based on these activities, the Association looked for positive personal examples who would serve as “human models” for future, as well as present performance, among old and young people, irrespective of their profession and position, stimulating the creative spirit and practical acting (profitable and productive implementation). Therefore, in 1999, the SPWiR has established the Tadeusz SENDZIMIR - Honorary Medal for excellent inventors, innovators or organizers of inventiveness movement.

Prof. Tadeusz SENDZIMIR was one of the most excellent Polish inventors of this century, starting in steel and metallurgy industry. Being born in Poland, he emigrated very early to France, China and finally to the USA. At that time, Poland was a very poor country and the economic migration in search of much better professional opportunities was treated very natural. Until today, his special Sendzimir multi-stand rolling of metals are still known. His innovative, intellectual firm is presently led by his son and grandson. It was really a very big day when son and T. Sendzimir Inc. - Chairman, Dr. Michael Sendzimir handed in, after selection procedures, the **T. Sendzimir - Honorary Medals** of SPWiR to winning laureates in the past and current year in Poland.

All these activities allowed the SPWiR to be admitted in 1996 as an ordinary institutional member of the AEI (Association of European Inventors) making it the first organization from this region of Europe to become a member, and to function as a corresponding member of IFIA - International Federation of Inventors Associations.

Since 1999, the SPWiR has been cooperating with WIPO - World Intellectual Property Organization, located in Geneva, Switzerland, collaborating obviously with many similar, national organizations in Europe, Asia and in the USA. It is a good opportunity to establish new effective relationships with Argentina and Latin America in general.

It is necessary to mention that the SPWiR in the past 10 years participated in 45 international innovative exhibitions, in 7 countries in 4 continents. There, it presented over 730 Polish inventions or innovations: 203 of them won gold or silver with distinction medals (28%), 121 - silver medals (17%), 78 - bronze medals (11%) and 85 - special awards (12%). Generally, over 2/3 of the presented projects were honoured with various forms of distinctions, which is another reason that enhances our pride. Many of the distinguished inventors, especially those from industrial organizations, started as innovators at a very early stage of their inventive career.

In the current year, in October (autumn), the SPWiR will be the main professional organizer of the IIIrd International Exhibition of Inventions in Gdańsk, Poland, named "INNOVATIONS-2000", inviting all foreign inventors or corresponding associations to participate in it as well as in the next exhibition that follows, starting from the year 2001 [1].

Please, don't forget it .Use Your opportunities in Poland!

Thinking about the past and future, the SPWiR instituted in the year the Gold and Silver Honour Medals of SPWiR for the best active members (incl. rationalizers and inventors), animators, organizers and promoters of innovative movement in Poland, linked with SPWiR activities, having in mind the stimulation of "proper" people to such performance.

Yes, this success -story is unfortunately not completely successful. Although this year the SPWiR with its members and guests was honoured for the first time in a special ceremony led by the Prime Minister of Poland and his Wife in the official governmental buildings, the Association has many current problems, some of which are very simple.

They are related to it every day functioning, existence, development, promotion of innovativeness in the economic sense (commercialization), attraction of younger people, widening of women contribution, new professional challenges based on rapid progress of informatics and electronics, new areas oriented to bio -technology and genetics, energy, military and space appliances and soon. But on the other hand, we suppose it is the preoccupation, and at the same time a great hope, for many of us, participating here in this Symposium.

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