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Introduction – the 20th Anniversary of “Eastern European Countryside”

“Eastern European Countryside” (EEC) is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year (2013). The first issue “0” appeared in 1993.

In the current issue of our periodical – as in the earlier 19 (issues 0–18) – it is our intention to analyse the process of change in the legislative, organisational, economic, social and cultural sphere of rural areas in Central and Eastern Europe. Researchers from various academic centres in Europe and beyond its borders write about these problems¹. As always, we include reviews of books devoted to changes in the rural areas of Central and Eastern Europe. We continue a chronicle of academic events and present a biogram of a classic of rural sociology in order to illustrate its accomplishments and to inform our readers that not everything of significance in this discipline has only appeared and continues to appear in the so-called West. In the contents there are two texts about our periodical: an article showing EEC against the background of three other English language periodicals dealing with rural development and the contents of issues 10/2004–19/2013. They both point to the passing of another

¹ Between 1993 and 2013 the following were published in *EEC*: 178 articles and academic studies (88 between 2004 and 2013), 19 reviews (respectively 11), 74 reports from various academic events (39), 16 biograms of classics of rural sociology from Central and Eastern Europe (8).

decade of the periodical and it is now time for an assessment (the first was presented on the occasion of its first decade²).

An important achievement of the past decade has been the systematic growth in readership of our periodical³, mainly due to its electronic version. We have been accessible in this way since 2007 in the Kujawy-Pomeranian Digital Library and since 2009 on the Versita electronic platform, thereby reaching tens of thousands of libraries throughout the world.

However, the greatest achievement of the last decade was obtaining a significant position on the international academic publishers' market. Since 2007 articles published in EEC have been indexed by: *The Social Sciences Citation Index*; *Social Scisearch* and the *Journal of Citation Reports/Social Science Edition*, which in fact means the periodical's accreditation on the Philadelphia List. Since 2010 EEC also holds the so-called **impact factor**.

We have done much to constantly improve our record, endeavouring to obtain interesting texts which are methodologically correct and include theoretical references which underwent a two-stage evaluation process before publication, firstly by members of the editorial board and after their recommendation by external critics, i.e. academic experts in Europe, North America and Asia⁴. We also tried to get information about the published texts included in as many abstract bases. Other than the already mentioned *Social Sciences Citation Index*, our periodical is also indexed in *Sociological Abstracts*; *The Central European Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* (CEJSH), jointly presided over by The Academies of Sciences in Poland, The Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary; the *Scopus* and the *Summon* bases as well as *Research Papers in Economics* (RePEc).

We constantly strived to reach new groups of readers and to gain potential authors by presenting the periodical at rural sociology congresses (The European Society of Rural Sociologists – ESRS and the International Rural Sociology Association – IRSA), beyond the rural sociology circle (e.g. by including the development problems of rural areas into the works of the European Sociology Society) and also beyond the sociological circle (e.g.

² Cf. Our authors and their articles – Nos. 0/1993–9/2003 of *Eastern European Countryside*, in: *Eastern European Countryside* 2004, no. 10, pp. 217–229.

³ The number of readers doubled in 2011.

⁴ A list of critics is on the periodical's website www.soc.uni.torun.pl/eec/.

by cooperating with the organisers of conferences or editors of periodicals in the field of economics, social geography, urban planning etc.)

The periodical's current position is primarily due to the contribution of the international editorial team and academic council, their determination for the recognition of *EEC*, their conscientiousness as regards the high quality of content and linguistic standard of the published texts, their tenacity in securing financial resources. I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to all the members of both these groups for their work and, all the more so, since it has been and will probably continue to be carried out on a voluntary basis.

I would also like to thank Jadwiga Komornicka for her 17 years' work as our native speaker, responsible for the high linguistic standard of *Eastern European Countryside*. I am sorry to have to say that the current issue of *EEC* is the last of 16 (1997–2013) co-edited by her.

Twenty years is not only a good moment for evaluation but also high time for change, inevitable for effective competition on the international, global and digitalised publishing market. The forthcoming challenges require new visions, ideas, competence as well as reference to tradition, i.e. the best in *Eastern European Countryside's* past.

Therefore, after numerous consultations which have lasted almost two years, in May this year I turned to the Rector of Nicolaus Copernicus University (UMK) asking for the closure of the existing term of the *EEC* Editorial Board and Advisory Council⁵, including the editor-in-chief (who has held this position from the very beginning, i.e. 20 years) on 31 September 2013, recommending new candidates for the 2014–2023 term.

I am pleased to announce that the Rector of UMK fully agreed with the request of the retiring editor-in-chief and has appointed a new editorial team for *EEC*, made up as follows: Christian Giordano (University of Friburg), Lutz Laschewski (Technical University of Cottbus, Alcedo Sozialforschung und Regionalentwicklung), Iwona Leśniewicz (Nicolaus Copernicus University) Laszlo J. Kulcsar (Kansas State University), Nigel Swain (University of Liverpool), Elwira Piszczek (Nicolaus Copernicus University), Monika Kwiecińska-Zdrenka (Nicolaus Copernicus University).

⁵ Their names appear on the title page of the periodical.

Monika Kwiecińska-Zdrenka⁶ has been appointed editor-in-chief of the periodical, Elwira Piszczek has been entrusted with the role of deputy editor and Iwona Leśniewicz with that of editorial secretary.

The Rector of UMK has also appointed a new Advisory Council, made up as follows: Anna Bandler (Slovak Agricultural University), David Brown (Cornel University), Feng Xingyuan (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences), Krzysztof Gorlach (Jagiellonian University), Andrzej Kaleta (UMK), Iren Szörenyine Kukorelli (Hungarian Academy of Sciences), Michal Lostak (Czech University of Life Science), Miguel Angel Sobrado (National University of Costa Rica).

So, in other words, the current issue is the last prepared by the “old” editorial team. The next issue (2014/20) will be the autonomous oeuvre of the “new” team, for whom I personally hold high hopes in the further development and growing academic rank of *EEC*.

⁶ Dr Monika Kwiecińska-Zdrenka is a sociologist employed at the Institute of Sociology, Nicolaus Copernicus University. Her academic interests lie around the problems of education and youth in rural areas. She has held the position of deputy editor-in-chief of *EEC* since 2006 (after the death of Dr. Barbara Weber, one of the founding members and deputy editor-in-chief of *EEC*).