

# Forum of Strategic Thinking



*10 December 2012, the PTE – The debate under the Paradoxes of Futurology 2050 on “A Global Forecast for the Next Forty Years – 2050 – A Report to the Club of Rome Commemorating the 40th anniversary of The Limits to Growth – Jorgen Randers – analysis of the work.”*

The Forum of Strategic Thinking is one of the important projects of the PTE. The Forum was established on 28 January 2008 in Warsaw. Three organizations were the initiators and originators of the forum: the Polish Economic Society, the Polish Association for the Club of Rome, and the College of Business Administration at the Warsaw School of Economics, (SGH). The Forum is to preserve the culture of strategic thinking which is disappearing and threatens the sustainable, harmonious socio-economic development in Poland.

The erosion of strategic thinking is actually a problem not only in Poland but also in other Western countries. This is a consequence of the Neoliberal trend, dominant in the last few decades as an ideological basis of socio-economic policy. In Neoliberalism, the long-term approach is by definition marginalized. This is due to an uncritical faith in the effectiveness, infallibility, effectiveness and proper driving force behind the mechanisms of the free market, characteristic of this trend. However, the global crisis has completely disputed the validity of such an approach. In

this sense, Henry Hazlitt’s warning that “Today is already the tomorrow which the bad economist yesterday urged us to ignore” can be regarded as a prophetic thesis.

The objective of the Forum is to promote culture and strategic thinking in Poland. Such activities as the organization of debates, as well as research and analyses, studies of world and national literature, serve this objective.

The establishment of the Forum of Strategic Thinking and popularization of its work by e.g., publication of the PTE Bulletins, stems from the Forum

organizers’ belief that in all spheres of socio-economic life, the need for futurological reflection and analysis as well as the long-term development strategies, is the greater, the greater are the uncertainty of action and the risk of making mistakes. For when the world is unpredictable and full of Taleb’s “black swans”, the primary function of futurological reflection should be to identify potential major socio-economic development trends and, above all, focus on the least predictable, unrecognized risk areas.

We assume that seminars and panel discussions under the Forum of Strate-

gic Thought will foster a breakthrough in Polish social sciences, a breakthrough in the methodology of futurological thinking. Hence, we analyse and discuss the masterpieces of world and Polish literature on futurology. The analyses are concentrated around the question to what extent these works contain elements of the new system of knowledge and imagination, which arrange our thinking about the future.

The Forum of Strategic Thinking is intended to provide a stimulus to address issues of twenty-first century futurology, influencing the reality *hic et nunc*, for the benefit of decisionmakers.

The primary function of futurological reflection and forecasts is to identify hazards and provide early warning. Apart from detecting threats it is necessary to identify in advance new opportunities and sources of development. Forecasts are conducive to stimulating multi-scenario thinking about the future. This corresponds to Toffler's concept of "social futurism".

Social futurism involves engaging broad sections of society and all levels of government and governance in strategic works. In the situation of pervasive uncertainty and incredible pace of change this can be a barrier to the destructive consequences of future shock, but requires institutional background and reconstruction of forecasting.

This indicates at the same time the importance of globally developing forecasting centres and geography of forecasts. Unfortunately, still relevant today is Alvin Toffler's thesis, according to which now everybody feels cut off from the opportunity to influence the direction and pace of changes. The reasons for studying probable variants of the future are irresistible. "Attempts to forecast the future inevitably alter it.", although "no one can 'know' the future." "Despite all this, it is time to erase, once and for all, the popular myth that the future is 'unknowable'". "A rough idea of what lies ahead, is better than none.

(...) and for many purposes extreme accuracy is wholly unnecessary" (Toffler, Future Shock).

The participants of the Forum of Strategic Thinking are people from academia, business, government, and local governments. The key question, from the point of view of the initiators of the Forum: "Polonia Quo Vadis?" is part of the list of scientific, business, social, and political priorities in Poland. Indeed, there is an unquestionable need to include the strategic thinking into the national education system and thereby encourage students to engage in the initiatives associated with this trend. The Forum debates on the future of Poland, Europe, and the world arouse interest in Poland and abroad, which was reflected in the international conference organized jointly with the Club of Rome and the Ministry of Regional Development, with the participation of prominent experts, including world-class futurologists (Warsaw Conference, Poland and Regions - The Perspectives of the 21st Century, 24-25 October 2008, Warsaw, Sheraton Hotel – [http://www.pte.pl/243\\_konferencje\\_cd.html](http://www.pte.pl/243_konferencje_cd.html) ).

Intellectual achievements of the Forum of Strategic Thinking are presented in the special PTE Bulletins, and its synthesis is in the Bulletin published under the title: "The Paradoxes of Futurology of the Year 2050", Economic Bulletin, 2014, No. 2 ( [http://www.pte.pl/pliki/1/68/PTE\\_Paradoksy\\_przesklad\\_www.pdf](http://www.pte.pl/pliki/1/68/PTE_Paradoksy_przesklad_www.pdf) )

The PTE Bulletins are an important form of information about current activities of the PTE and one of the forms of promotion and popularization of economic knowledge. This is important also because the PTE organizes the annual Economic Knowledge Competition, addressed to secondary school students.



*Professor Antoni Kukliński, the main initiator of the Strategic Thinking Forum*