



A word from the Editor

I am writing this text as the number of Coronavirus infections approaches 10 million, death toll reaches 500,000¹, and the economic impact of COVID-19 is recognized as the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression of 1929–1935. Nonetheless, compared to the overall death toll from the 1346–1353 *magna mortalitas* pandemic, also known as the Black Death², and considered the most fatal pandemic in human history, the number of COVID-19 deaths can be considered as relatively low. Historical sources indicate that the Black Death not only caused some Italian and German cities to lose more than half of their population but also resulted in significant changes in the landscape. It should be noted, however, that in comparing COVID-19 deaths to the *magna mortalitas*, we compare the period of 7 months with that of 7 years, and at considerably different levels of civilization development. In this context, the current death rate is very pessimistic. When analyzing secular trends, it can be seen that pandemics erupt at least once every 100 years, with varying intensity, killing millions of lives and having catastrophic economic consequences (e.g. the Spanish Flu from the second decade of the 20th century). Unfortunately, despite the enormous progress in science and technology as well as historical experience, humanity is still underprepared for epidemics, and not only in the poor, but also in the richest nations. This poor preparation pertains both to the sphere of health protection and the entire socio-economic system, ranging from individual violations of elementary principles of personal protection to effective procedures for managing the pandemic crisis on a global, international or national scale.

As we have learned from history, crises not only bring unpleasant and costly consequences but also create premises for change or reform. It happens that people make the most unwanted but necessary choices or decisions only when the situation becomes really bad. The global and local consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, in various spheres of socio-economic systems, along with the need to overcome the negative impacts, create opportunities for change. The crucial question, therefore, is whether the globalized world and its regional or national sub-systems can

¹ <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/> (access 26.06.2020).

² It is estimated that in Eurasia between 75 and 200 million people were killed then. See: K. Philipkoski, *Black Death's Gene Code Cracked*, <https://www.wired.com/2001/10/black-deaths-gene-code-cracked/>

properly assess the drama of the current situation and the risk of not making the necessary decisions, before the situation takes on a truly catastrophic dimension. In other words, we urgently need wide win-win strategies – in the widest institutional and structural arrangements. The adequate place and role in the implementation of those strategies belongs to financial market entities.

The 79th issue of *Safe Bank* journal contains a few studies in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Two studies deal directly with the issue of monetary policy in the face of disruption caused by the pandemic. The first addresses the issues of monetary policy in an international perspective, while the second synthetically covers the challenges faced by the Monetary Policy Council in Poland in the event of economic disruption caused by COVID-19 during the period of historically low interest rates. The next two articles deal with the impact of the pandemic on the functioning of the economy or banks in Poland and Italy.

The two last studies in the “Problems and views” section go beyond the COVID-19 related issues. One deals with the Polish deposit guarantee system, which can be associated with the panic of depositors in the period preceding the lockdown and the rapid withdrawal of money from accounts as a form of protection against any restrictions to account access. The last study in this chapter is devoted to considerations on the commission for granting a loan as an instrument for transferring the cost to a consumer by financial institutions in Poland.

Special emphasis ought to be placed on the texts in the Miscellanea section. This time we shall present three studies produced within the framework of the European Financial Congress³. The first concerns Macroeconomic challenges and forecasts for Poland. This is the fifth edition of the report prepared in cooperation with EFC experts while at the same time being the only currently available national study next to similar ones prepared by World Bank and IMF. They can be treated as complementary to previously discussed articles regarding the situation in Poland during the pandemic, including the projection for 2021 and 2022. The next two are the representation of the EFC positions with regard to the European Commission’s consultation document on Digital Operational Resilience Framework for financial services and the European Securities and Markets Authority’s consultation paper on Draft Regulatory Technical Standards under the Benchmarks Regulation.

Wishing you an interesting reading!

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Editor-in-Chief

³ The European Financial Congress (EFC), established in 2011, is a platform for debating the issues of security, financial stability and economic growth in Europe, and for discussing measures to ensure a successful future for Poland and the European Union (<https://www.efcongress.com/en/>).