

# Foreword

It is no exaggeration to say that with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the world came to a standstill. The economic consequences resulting from closing borders and keeping workers at home, including disrupted transportation, supply chains, and shrinking trade in goods and services, were very distressing, but still hardly even comparable to the immensity of human suffering resulting from a disease taking a deadly toll. As early as the end of 2020, progressive work on a vaccine brought hope for defeating the virus, and the expansion of digital technologies for overcoming problems in economic processes. However, most economists agreed that we are not returning to the pre-pandemic starting point, but rather heading toward a new normal.

In the monograph *Toward the “new normal” after Covid-19 – a post-transition economy perspective*, published in 2021, a team of researchers from the PUEB’s Institute of International Business and Economics presented the results of the first studies on the economic consequences of the pandemic. With successive waves of COVID-19 still hitting, some chapters contained thoughts and hypotheses that could only be fully verified in subsequent years. We knew that the research needed to be continued and that as the ‘new normal’ set in, its diagnosis and description would become more precise. However, convinced we were that we would not lack topics for research, none of the members of our institute community’s intuition went so far as to predict that the ‘new normal’ before we could recognise and tame it for good, would be disrupted by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The global impact of the war is already being felt for the second year, and at the time of putting this book into print, the end of the conflict in Ukraine is still hard to predict.

Therefore, in the title of the monograph, we pose the question of whether any ‘new normal’ even exists. And however the world of VUCA, disruptions and shocks is simply impossible to get used to, as researchers we believe that in such circumstances knowledge becomes particularly valuable. Defining, studying and describing turmoils and their consequences make it possible, if only to some extent, to control them. The aim of the research presented in our book is the identification and exploration of challenges “the new normal reality” revealed at the

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supranational and national level, created for business sectors, industries, companies and consumers. Focusing on those challenges we got the chance to deeply and broadly investigate the multidimensional impact of the pandemic shock on the business reality. Doing that we hoped to collect valuable foundation for the formulation of resilience policy which to be effective must respect the peculiarity of national economies, industries, firms and consumers.

This monograph is divided into three parts corresponding to the different levels of the economy: macro, meso and micro, consisting of a total of eleven studies authored by scholars and doctoral students of the PUEB's Institute of International Economics. The individual chapters address various issues, differ in methodology and length, but all of them are devoted to the diagnosis of the transformations that occurred in economic processes impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The first part of the monograph focuses on the challenges posed by the pandemic at the national and supranational level. This part of the book is a bird's-eye view of the pandemic-induced transformations in various spheres of the economies of selected countries or groups of countries, such as the European Union. In the first chapter, which is conceptual in nature, **Galit Palzur** introduces and organizes the various concepts and approaches in the natural disaster literature, aiming to place the COVID-19 pandemic among them. **Tadeusz Kowalski** in the second chapter empirically analyses the macroeconomic implications of the pandemic in six European economies, the US and Japan, taking into account not only the short-term direct consequences, but also the effects of policy tools aimed at shielding the economy from the pandemic crisis. **Justyna Majewska and Szymon Truskolaski** in the third chapter continue the empirical approach by focusing on a specific measure—tourists arrivals. The authors examine it in four European countries, comparing the effects caused by the pandemic with those caused by other types of crises. The COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent war in Ukraine significantly affected the global trading system. In the fourth chapter, **Grzegorz Mazur** identifies the resulting major challenges for the European Union's Common Commercial Policy. Another area in which there is no shortage of challenges is people migration. The effects of pandemic border closures in the context of the inflow of foreign labor to the EU are analysed by **Judyta Cabańska** in the fifth chapter. This chapter crowns the first part of the monograph, which presents the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in macroeconomic terms.

The second part of the book consists of four studies of issues at the level of sectors particularly affected by the shock of the pandemic outbreak and its accompanying lockdown. In the sixth chapter, **Piotr Banaszyk and Waldemar Budner** diagnose the changes in the geography of the logistics of consumer goods that have taken place in Poland in 2020–2022. The seventh chapter **Piotr Banaszyk**, together with **Sylvia Konecka and Anna Maryniak**, devoted to the presentation

of the results of research on the competitiveness of Polish road carriers, which has been significantly affected not only by the pandemic and the legislative changes implemented to mitigate its effects, but also by rising fuel prices and environmental and technological challenges. **Marcin Jurczak**, in the eighth chapter, continues these considerations with regard to public transportation. The ninth chapter, by **Agnieszka Niezgoda and Ewa Markiewicz**, contains the results of the authors' research on the substitution effect in the travel services market that could be observed as a result of the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The third part of the monograph includes three studies on the challenges posed by the pandemic to companies and consumers. In the tenth chapter, **Marian Gorynia and Piotr Trąpczyński** discuss the behavior of Polish exporters in 2020–2021. In the eleventh chapter, **Łukasz Malys and Rafał Jabłoński** present a case study to illustrate the impact of the pandemic on sustainable business practices. Since the case study involves the international logistics company, the study is a microeconomic complement to the conclusions of the seventh chapter. **Wiktoria Rakowska and Zakaria Talouni** devoted the final twelfth chapter to the issue of trust in sharing economy platforms. The acceleration of digital transformation due to the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the development of digital services confronting not only companies but also consumers with new challenges.

We hope that the inquiries of a wide range of researchers from PUEB's Institute of International Economics and Business will, on the one hand, sort out what we have known so far about the new normal, and, on the other hand, will be an interesting inspiration for further research no longer only on the reality of VUCA, but BANI (brittle, anxious, non-linear, incomprehensible). Maybe the findings will stimulate our readers to discuss how companies, industries and, further, entire economies can function under conditions of permacrisis caused by Brexit and Russian invasion of Ukraine among others, and the deepening complexity of the global economy. We hope that the debate facilitated by reading this monograph will accelerate the identification of new strategies and growth paths to confront the key global challenges.

And last but not least let us as the Editors express our great gratitude to the Authors who accepted our invitation to publish together and provided great contributions.

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