ENTERPRISE IN TRANSITION

Fourth International Conference on Enterprise in Transition

> Proceedings Book of Extended Abstracts CD ROM with full papers

Edited by The Faculty of Economics, Split



University of Split **Faculty of Economics** Split Split, Croatia

Publisher

Faculty of Economics, University of Split, Radovanova 13, 21000 Split, CROATIA Phone | + 385 21 366 033; Fax | + 385 21 366 026;

> For the Publisher Prof. Petar Filipić, Dean

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Language Editing Eni Čavar

Proof Reading Maja Mihaljević

Typesetting Zvonimir Tošić

Cover Design Igor Pupić-Vurilj

80,00 t CD Rom

359640



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CIP—Katalogizacija u publikaciji Sveučilišna knjižnica u Splitu

UDK 339 (063)

INTERNATIONAL Conference on Enterprise in Transition (4; 2001; Split – Hvar)

Enterprise in Transition: Proceedings / Fourth International Conference on Enterprise in Transition, Split – Hvar • May 24-26, 2001; [Managing Editor Srećko Goić]. –Split, Faculty of Economics, University of Split; 2001. –XVII, 501 str.; 25 cm Bibliografija uz svaki rad.

ISBN 953-6024-39-X

ISBN 953-6024-39-X 1000 000-100 1000 7 AVIA TILITE

D.2014.86 6

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INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS OF POLISH FIRMS – RESULTS OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

— EXTENDED ABSTRACT —

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Key words: firm competitiveness, competitive position, competitive potential, competitive strategy

The paper has two aims. The first one is to present a three-dimensional concept of the competitiveness of an enterprise. The concept of firm competitiveness discussed in the paper covers three dimensions:

- competitive position of an enterprise,
- · competitive potential of an enterprise,
- · competitive strategy of an enterprise.

Each of the above-mentioned dimensions was subject to operationalisation – sets of variables describing particular dimensions of firm competitiveness were suggested.

The second aim of the paper is to present the results of empirical studies on the competitiveness of Polish firms in comparison with the European Union firms in the light of Poland's anticipated entry into the EU. The research is based on the concept of firm competitiveness developed in the first part of the paper. The studies were carried out in the year 2000 and included 68 firms of the manufacturing industry registered in Poland. The results obtained indicate that according to managers from those 68 enterprises, there is a significant competitive gap between the Polish firms and their rivals from the EU. This gap concerns all the three dimensions of firm competitiveness: competitive position, competitive potential and competitive strategy. Studies on the competitive gap carried out by the author at the level of a firm prove that the suggested conceptualisation and operationalisation of the idea of firm competitiveness are useful in practice.

Firm competitiveness consists of three elements: competitive position, competitive potential and instruments of competition (competitive strategies).

The results of the studies confirm the existence of an intuitively anticipated competitive gap between the Polish and the EU enterprises in the sphere of the three above-mentioned elements of firm competitiveness.

Bearing in mind the limitations connected with the research method applied (gathering managers' opinions on the competitiveness of their companies), it should be underlined that although the above-mentioned competitive gap exists, there also exist some premises to be optimistic, namely:

- The gap is not perceived as enormous—i.e. average competitors operating
 on the EU market are perceived as rivals with whom the Polish firms can
 compete effectively,
- Forecasts concerning competitive position, competitive potential and instruments of competition indicate that the Polish enterprises assume an aggressive attitude and intend to reduce the currently existing competitive gap. If this is to be successful, it is necessary to reformulate competitive strategies of many of the analysed firms and to obtain support from the economic policy (Gorynia, 1998).

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