Public science and technology policy: Polish experiences in 1989-2009

La ciencia pública y la política de tecnología: Experiencias de Polonia en 1989-2009

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Abstract

Two turning points have occurred in the modern development of Central and Eastern Europe: the first one in 1989/1990 - a collapse of a centrally planned system and the beginning of building of a free-market economy in most Central and East European countries (CEECs)[1], and the second one in 2004 (1st May) - a formal membership of eight CEECs in The European Union[2].

By the end of the 1980s, a centrally planned system was functioning as the main regulation mechanism in most economies in Central and Eastern Europe. Market mechanisms played, generally speaking, an indirect role, although bigger – in some countries, and smaller – in other ones.

At the beginning of the 1990s, fundamental, economic and political reforms started in the majority of those countries. The essence of the transformations has been an introduction of free-market forces into national economies together with their deep restructuring. A crucial element of the economic transformation should be a technological transition aiming at the modernization of a given national economy. So, innovations are expected to play a key role in the economy's restructuring and modernization.

Moreover, global markets become more and more competitive. To compete globally, Central and Eastern European countries need world-class innovations. A level of a country's innovativeness is a resultant of activities of various actors in the modern economy. One of the actors is government.

So, **the main aim of this paper** is to show and evaluate major changes in public science and technology policy in the period of transition (1989-2009). Poland here will be a case-study. **The main hypothesis** says that the government is significantly responsible for the present state of innovation in the country. The analysis will be conducted applying the author's model of the innovation scene based on the concept of Triple Helix by Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff (1995).

This paper's general conception was laid out in the author's Spotlight Article *Innovation in transition: What role for government* published in the web-site (www.triplehelixinstitute.org) of The Institute for Triple Helix Innovation, Honolulu, Hawaii, USA, 2008.

Keywords: innovation, science and technology policy, countries in transition

[1] They are named: countries in transition or transitional economies.
[2] Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and The Czech Republic. In the case of Bulgaria and Romania – 2007.