

British voters decision, made on 23rd of June 2016, to leave the European Union (decision about the so-called Brexit) will visibly create wide range of unpredictable consequences on the United Kingdom as well as on the other EU member states, euro zone and the wider region. A vote for Brexit can be perceived as a starting point for the third round of the European crisis, following euro zone debt crisis and migration issue. The result of the referendum generated, above all, quite large shock to the British society and economy. Nevertheless, for the rest of the EU member states, Brexit would obviously not be a zero-sum game. Each one EU countries will be hit by Brexit, to a smaller or larger extent.

In many EU countries there should be a visible discernible impact on the companies' strategies caused by the British referendum. The project offers fundamentals that are free from emotions for the undoubtedly difficult negotiation process that lies ahead. Since the UK withdrawal case is the first one, it creates uncertainty for all actors (small, large countries, EU institutions, societies, companies, etc.) and immediately after the referendum it was perceived as a significant rupture for the EU. Hence, the proposal is driven by the strong belief that neither the UK nor the EU member states and institutions are interested in escalating tensions and the European disintegration process following Brexit. All stakeholders in the Brexit negotiation process have a stake in both the political as well as the economic stability of Europe, which will ensure a safe environment for companies to continue their mutually beneficial cooperation.

Therefore, the aim of this research project is to verify if and how Polish companies prepare for the forthcoming change. In particular, it is important to study the adaptive strategies the companies implement and create a typology of these strategies according to their main characteristics. To fulfil the project's objectives it will be necessary to conduct a series of analyses that include:

- Determining factors that shape the strategies of Polish companies in the British market in light of the forthcoming Brexit,
- Ranking industries as most and least vulnerable to economic consequences of Brexit,
- Assessing the uncertainty effects of future UK-EU relations on the behaviour patterns of Polish companies.

In order to meet the objectives it is necessary to conduct basic research that will allow to test the hypotheses posed. They include research focused on assessing the components of empirical model. The project contains the comprehensive in-depth literature studies and empirical studies with the use of quantitative and qualitative methods. Primary research will be implemented with use of computer assisted telephone interviews (CATIs) method that aims to obtain information on the past, present and futures strategies of Polish companies in the British market. The research sample will cover both (1) service and production industries, (2) companies that entered with equity and non-equity entry modes, (3) companies of different age and (4) experience. The information collected will include a wide timeline (2004-2018) to ensure that all trends in the UK-Poland relations are highlighted.

One of the main results of the project will be the development of the conceptual model that will allow to study company's behaviour patterns in face of external, unexpected turbulences. The companies' strategies will be tested against different groups of factors which include firm-level, industry-level and country-level determinants. The study will determine whether Brexit is, as many state, a threat to the existence of Polish-British economic cooperation, or as some claim, just a challenge, that if tackled wisely, may turn into an opportunity. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that the proposed study takes a unique approach – most of the conducted research focuses on the *post-Brexit* situation trying to assess the scale of changes once the UK's exit becomes a fact. Here, strategies implemented prior to the event are of interest.