

Dear Rector, Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen, ¹

I have the pleasure and great honor to open this very First *German-Polish Joint Conference on Probability Theory and Mathematical Statistics*. Our conference stands in the rich traditions of the annual Meetings of Polish Mathematical Statisticians, and the bi-annual German Probability and Statistics Days and Meetings of Polish Probabilists, but it is the first time that we have such a joint conference.

I would like to thank our Polish colleagues for hosting this joint conference in Poland. Your country has a most impressive tradition in Mathematics. Among the founders of the areas of Probability Theory and Mathematical Statistics, and its foundations in Analysis, were great minds from Poland, such as Banach, Kac, Marcinkiewicz, Neyman, Orlicz, Rajchman, Schauder, Steinhaus, Ulam and Zygmund, to name just a few. Mentioning these names, I am also painfully reminded of the fact that my country did horrible things to the Polish people in the 20th century. To our Polish colleagues, I am deeply grateful that despite this history you have welcomed us to this joint meeting.

Organizing this conference was a great experience. From the very first discussions on, the idea of holding a joint German-Polish Stochastics conference was met with great enthusiasm and support from all sides. Originally, there was just the idea, but when the Scientific Programme Committee met two years ago, it became more concrete. We realized that there are many research areas with strong traditions in our two countries. And so we decided to have invited paper sessions organized by pairs of scientists, one from Germany and one from Poland. The responses that we received from the session organizers were overwhelming: despite their very busy schedules all the session organizers accepted our invitation within a very short time.

Let me continue with some specific words of thanks:

- First of all, I would like to thank the members of the Scientific Programme Committee for their work. We had a very fruitful meeting in Bochum about two years ago, many e-mail discussions before and after, and the outcome is the exciting programme that all of you can find in your abstract books.
- Secondly, I would like to thank our plenary speakers for having accepted our invitation and for coming to Torun to deliver their keynote addresses about important recent developments in Probability Theory and Mathematical Statistics:
 1. Rama Cont (Paris, London)
 2. Sara van de Geer (Zürich)
 3. Frank den Hollander (Leiden)
 4. Gerard Kerkycharian (Paris)
 5. Dominique Picard (Paris)
- The organizers of the invited paper sessions for having prepared such an excellent program of invited lectures with many eminent speakers, and for having helped to organize also the contributed paper sessions.
- And then I wish to thank all the speakers at this conference, be it invited or contributed, for having come to Torun in order to discuss the results of their recent research. I thank all the colleagues who have come here with posters, and moreover all participants of this meeting.

¹Opening speech for the *German-Polish Joint Conference on Probability and Mathematical Statistics*

- Then I would like to thank our sponsors. The official organizers of this meeting are the Faculty of Mathematics and Computer Science of Torun University and the Fachgruppe Stochastik of the German Mathematical Society; both organizations also contributed major financial resources for this conference. I am happy to see that the chair of the Fachgruppe Stochastik of the German Mathematical Society, Prof. Nicole Baeuerle, is with us, as well as the Vice-Rector of the Nicolaus Copernicus University, Torun. Both will say some words in an minute.

We received major grants from the Województwo Kujawsko-Pomorskie, the Polish Academy of Sciences, the German Science Foundation DFG, the Sonderforschungsbereich SFB 823, the Bernoulli Society, as well as from the publishing houses De Gruyter and Springer.

- Last, but not least, I wish to thank the locals. Firstly, the Faculty of Mathematics and Computer Science of the Nicolaus Copernicus University Torun for hosting the conference in this wonderful building. And then the three members of the local organizing committee:

- Adam Jakubowski (Chair)
- Joanna Karłowska-Pik (Scientific Secretary)
- Bartosz Ziemkiewicz (Website and Publishing)

Adam, Joanna and Bartek did all the work in the background, from creating the website and keeping contact with the conference participants to arranging the housing, organizing food and drinks, arranging the social programme, printing the book of abstracts, and making sure that money came in and that bills got paid. If you have ever been involved in the organization of a major conference such as ours, you will know how much work this involves. Adam, Joanna and Bartek did a great job, working literally day and night - I received e-mails long after midnight and as early as 6 in the morning. It was a great pleasure for me to work with you, and I am very grateful for all the work you did. I think that you deserve a round of applause.

I visited Torun for the first time in the summer of 1989, shortly before the dramatic changes in Europe took place. The time of my visit here was only 5 months prior to the fall of the Berlin wall, but still nobody could foresee the developments that would follow in the months and years to come. If anybody then had told me that 15 years later Poland would be part of NATO and the European Community, well I am not sure I would have believed you. We have all reasons to be extremely happy and grateful that Poland and Germany are now partners in Europe. Now, it is our task to fill the European idea with life, and we all can contribute to this in our very own ways. Talk to your colleagues from abroad, get to know each other, invite each other for future visits, and possibly make plans for collaborations. Discuss what the situation for researchers in your country is like, whether you are a professor, postdoc or Ph.D. students. What are your hopes and worries for the future?

Dear colleagues from Poland and Germany, dear visitors from abroad: On behalf of the Scientific Programme Committee, I wish you all a most enjoyable conference.

Herold Dehling (Chair of the Scientific Programme Committee)