

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR OF POLITEJA

We present to the readers the new issue of *Politeja*. This time, it is devoted to Venezuela. It is the first issue that focuses entirely on a Latin American country.

This publication is one of the fruits of the continuously-growing cooperation between the Jagiellonian University Faculty of International and Political Studies and Venezuelan universities, the establishment of which was made possible thanks to the initiative of the Polish Embassy in Caracas, where Krzysztof Jacek Hinz served as Ambassador at the time.

This publication aims to present a comprehensive picture of contemporary political and socio-cultural conditions in Venezuela, and to show the specificity and dynamics of the country and its society.

The works on this issue were coordinated simultaneously by four co-editors. In Caracas, the selection of texts by specialists from the Simón Bolívar University was supervised by Héctor Maldonado Lira. Caroline Bosc-Bierne de Oteyza was in charge of the work carried out at the Andrés Bello Catholic University. Silvana A. Gómez Mercado coordinated the work on the articles by scholars from other academic units. On the part of the Faculty of International and Political Studies at the Jagiellonian University, the work was coordinated by Anna Kaganiec-Kamieńska.

The main idea behind this issue of *Politeja* was the decision that the selection of topics and articles would largely depend on the Venezuelan co-editors. The initiative was met with great interest on the part of authors from Venezuela. Thanks to the enormous effort and commitment of the co-editors from Caracas, more than 30 large texts were submitted for print. Sadly, not all of them could appear in this volume.

The articles in this volume were written by renowned experts in their respective fields and concern only selected areas of Venezuelan reality while omitting a number of other important political and social issues, an interesting outline of which can be found in the Foreword by HE Ambassador Krzysztof Jacek Hinz. The work on this issue of *Politeja* started when Hugo Chávez was still formally the President of Venezuela. Chávez had been at the helm of the government for many years and brought about si-

gnificant changes in many areas of Venezuela's social and political life – a process that continued until his death on and was completed after his death on 5th March 2013. Nicolás Maduro – a close associate of Hugo Chávez and Vice President – was elected as the new President in the general presidential elections held on 14th April 2013. His swearing in, therefore, raises new questions about the new vision for the country's development, and the continuation or introduction of changes with regard to the policy conducted by Chávez's government. All of the above means that Venezuela remains a fascinating area of research – both for researchers in the fields of social sciences and humanities.

As we finish the works on this 'Venezuelan' issue of *Politeja*, we would like to extend our most sincere thanks to HE Ambassador of the Republic of Poland, Krzysztof Jacek Hinz, for his invaluable assistance and commitment in building and strengthening the relations of the Jagiellonian University and the universities of Caracas, as well as for providing a Foreword to this volume. We would also like to thank Patrycja Satora, the then-Third Secretary for Culture, Science and the Press, for her strong support of a closer mutual cooperation between the JU Faculty of International and Political Studies and the universities in Caracas. We would also like to give very special thanks to the Venezuelan co-editors of this volume, Professors: Héctor Maldonado Lira, Caroline Bosc-Bierne de Oteyza, and Silvana A. Gómez Mercado – for their contribution and involvement in the work on this issue. We are also grateful to all the collaborators on this issue who also contributed in the preparation and edition of this volume, in particular to the professors: Rafael Escalona and Marina Meza of the Simón Bolívar University, as well as Lizbeth Sánchez, Natalia Hidalgo, Anitza Freitas, José Luis Da Silva, Tito Lacruz, Tomás Straka, Jesús María Casal, Ligia Bolívar, Noreida González and Mauren Rebolledo - of the Andrés Bello Catholic University. And finally, we are thankful to all the Authors for their tremendous contribution to bringing the readers of *Politeja* closer to contemporary Venezuela.