

FAREWELL TO A EUROPEAN FRIEND.
IN MEMORIAM JANINA JÓŹWIAK
(1948–2016)

These were thrilling times when I arrived in Warsaw in June 2009 to visit Professor Janina Józwiak and colleagues at the Warsaw School of Economics for the first time. A number of leading European research institutes in the field of demography, including the Institute of Statistics and Demography, were about to found a new collaborative network to provide top-level research results to policy audiences and the broader public. It was not at all clear yet whether this initiative would be successful, and great challenges were ahead. I fondly remember the first time I walked into Janina Józwiak's office – and was immediately overwhelmed by the cordial atmosphere and her great collegiality. There were posters of research conferences and announcements of new publications as well as two photographs, one showing her in the regalia of the rector and one of her with Pope John Paul II. In a way, those decorations represented somehow symbolically her highest virtues: excellent scientific standards, restless community service, and a deep sense of humanity.

Janina Józwiak was not only one of Population Europe's first and foremost founding members, but she also remained instrumental and a reliable ally in making this initiative of European partners a success in the years that followed. It is needless to say that Population Europe owes her a great deal. Janina Józwiak always provided support in any way she could and gave indispensable advice. Whenever possible, she volunteered and tirelessly contributed to the accomplishments and ventures carried out by Population Europe. Her latest contribution in April 2016 in the "Population Insights" series only a few months before her death is a legacy for Population Europe and should be simply quoted here as it is: "*Demographic policies can be thorny. Family policy is strongly linked with culture, and so easily and often politicised. Migration quickly gives way to questions of identity and economic uncertainty in a globalising world. Yet both are complex and can take years to bear fruit. They require a strong foundation in scientific expertise – not ideological preferences for one model of living over another. To be sure, demographers are not immune from ideological persuasion. But a good demographer, like any good scientist, will have the strength of will and faith in the scientific method to accept results that do not agree with their worldview. Open discussion, peer review, international comparisons, and work in teams – especially international teams – are essential best*

practices here that should be fostered at every opportunity. Policymakers should follow suit. Whether politicians, functionaries or stakeholders, they should be ready to accept difficult realities, work cooperatively, debate openly, invite scrutiny, and develop innovative solutions to today's demographic challenges. In other words, they should base their work on scientific best practices as well as the knowledge. It will make their contribution, and the democratic process, much more meaningful."

When I arrived in Warsaw seven years later in July 2016 to escort our friend Janina Józwiak on her final journey, I knew it was going to be a very sad day. The deep sympathies during the funeral, as well as from the international research community were overwhelming. European demographers and the field of demography have suffered a great loss – the loss of a great researcher, an engaged advisor and a good friend. But there is still hope: the great achievements of Janina Józwiak – and the person Janina was – will forever stay in the hearts of her friends, in the hearts of her colleagues and, last but not least, in the heart of Europe.

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