



FRIENDS FOREVER

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I met Konrad for the first time in October 2009, when he welcomed the Hungarian delegation to the *Warsaw Regional Forum* at Warsaw Chopin Airport late in the evening. During the following two-day study tour we became friends very quickly, so that on the second day of the trip I became a member of the informal inner circle ('group') he was leading. It was a great pleasure and honour for me. I really loved Konrad's unique, always positive and innovative approach, as well as his creative ideas and relevant questions. He had an excellent sense of humor, as well as a professional taste for identifying and solving problems, for coming up with new ideas and perspectives, and for making the boring things interesting and exciting. Bearing these core values and skills at basic level had to be demonstrated by candidates applying for the 'group' membership in practice, in frame of a tough entrance examination. As a 'group' member, I had the possibility to develop those of my basic skills further, for which I am very grateful firstly to Konrad, but to all members of the 'group'.

It was always a pleasure for me to be in Konrad's company, as well as to participate in the study tours he organised as part of each *Warsaw Regional Forum*. During the study trips we discovered and visited several highly interesting places. For example, we observed elks in the Biebrza National Park, visited the towns of Białystok and Żyrardów, as well as Chopin's birthplace in Żelazowa Wola. We also went to see a milk factory and an opencast coal mine, tried the thermal bath in Uniejów and admired the night lights of Warsaw from a rented tram. In 2019, we investigated the suburbanisation process of the Polish capital city by visiting the black labour market as well as by counting cars with Ukrainian registration plate in a small town near Warsaw. Furthermore, we went to see the emerging Książenice settlement as a model of organised suburbanisation, as well as the under-construction water amusement park and the Chinese colony, both of them located near Warsaw. The experiences I have had on these study trips are memories forever, while the knowledge I have gained has been incorporated into my professional life as a researcher and university lecturer.

Konrad usually organised Warsaw Regional Forums with great motivation and enthusiasm in every two years. His curious nature, excellent problem-solving skills and the good company ensured that each study tour and conference was extremely exciting and interesting. Over the years,

we met again and again at several international conferences and our friendship had continuously deepened. During my maternity leave we kept in touch by email, and after my return to work we were able to meet again personally in 2019. Unfortunately, I did not have the opportunity to participate in a joint research project with Konrad, but he was such a key stable contact point for me in Poland that I definitely planned to work with him after 2019. Although the Covid-19 pandemic temporarily prevented the implementation of this idea, we kept in touch by email and were looking forward to the 10th Warsaw Regional Forum to meet in person again.

When we said goodbye in October 2019, I didn't think it would be the last time we would meet. Although I knew that his curious nature would always inspire him to try new things and have new adventures, the countless experiences and adventures he obtained and lived (through) in different parts of the world made me sure that he could always be able to take care of himself. Unfortunately, I was wrong. I was deeply shocked and devastated by his sudden death. His loss is a great tragedy for his family, his friends and the scientific community as well. I will always cherish and honour his memory and carry on the values and approaches I learnt from him. Our common experiences will always live in my everlasting memory.

Dear Konrad, thank you for having me as your friend and part of your life! I will miss you ever, and never forget you! I take leave of you with Richard Bach's rows: 'A farewell is necessary before we can meet again, and meeting again, after moments or a lifetime, is certain for those who are friends.' I believe, one day we will meet again! Good bye dear friend!



Figure 1. The 'group' in 2019

