

No one but us will defend our rights

Interview with prof. Leszek Balcerowicz

DEKODER: Hidden public debt in Poland is over 3 billion PLN. Is there a chance it may decrease in the present economic and political situation?

Leszek Balcerowicz: Overall, the prognosis of the Civil Development Forum in 2015, i.e. before the elections, was that without proper reforms, Polish economy will grow much slower. What PiS (Law and Justice Party) is doing now brings on even worse case scenario, because we have no reforms, we have anti-reforms. Starting with 're-polonisation' of economy through dangerous promises of reducing retirement age.

What positive aspects of the Morawiecki Plan do you see?

Our Forum is constantly watching the work of the minister and anyone who is interested, can find detailed information on the foundation's website. In short, I can say that a plan does not mean declarations of lofty goals because this is too easy. A plan is a professional selection of means to achieve these particular goals. From this point of view, that plan is a total humbug. This is because, in the so called Morawiecki Plan, the most important problems, notably the tension in public finances are omitted. Proposed solutions move in the direction opposite to what is needed, like an increase of political intervention in the economy as it was during socialism. Then, all was totally political. I don't know of any country in which such strategy would be beneficial.

What is your attitude to Jaroslaw Kaczynski?

I do not judge him as a person, because I do not know him. He doesn't know me either, but this does not hinder him from making comments about me. However, I rate him on the basis of what he and his group are doing in Poland. I rate him very badly, I am very critical of him. This is first of all, because they distort

Polish history. Period after 1989,

was the time of a great success of Poland in comparison with other countries which were coming out of socialism. There is enough unquestionable data and empirical research to support this. Secondly, what he proposes, is regressive, by Western standards, it is a strike in the heart of the state of law, particularly in the Constitutional Tribunal; it is a growth of already too high a power of the prosecutors, and in economy, it is an increase in political interventionism.

What is your opinion on the selection and first months of office of the new chairman of NBP, Adam Glapinski?

So far, from what I hear, I have no reason to criticise him. I have no knowledge of any of his decisions which are in contrary to good practices of central banks.



Leszek Balcerowicz is a Polish professor of economics, the former chairman of the National Bank of Poland and Deputy Prime Minister in Mazowiecki's government. He is famous for implementing the Polish economic transformation program in the 1990s.

Lech Walesa recently talked about the need to prepare for a clear up after this government and this should start now. How much time will this take?

Go to Ukraine, you will see how much there is to do over there. I assume, that it will work in a way that we won't have to re-build everything from scratch, only parts. There are many non-government organisations working on law as well as economy. I will add - because little

is spoken about this, new people who voted for PiS. Over 20% are staple PiS voters who will not be swayed by discussion or propaganda. Then there is the increase of the 15% of people recognition of whom is extremely important. Because, before one says anything, one has to know who to say this to. One must know what made people who previously voted for Platforma (Civic Party), suddenly vote for PiS and from this diagnosis, one will be able to draw up a strategy. One can speculate, of course, but it is better to know.

Are we able to oppose the new budget in this form as PiS wants? Are we able to persuade business owners to limit budget contributions?

I would stay far from such fantasies. It is easier to convince business to put some money towards supporting KOD (The Committee for the Defence of Democracy). We need people to observe what is happening.

What is the role of KOD? What would you wish us?

At this moment indeed, it is most important to register the incidents of state discrimination of the critics of PiS. We ought to register and publicise concrete names of the prosecutors who take such steps. This will increase the risk of discriminatory behaviour, but it will also form protection of the people who are discriminated against. Strategically speaking, I think a good constitution,

that defends liberal laws of the citizens can only exist where sufficient number of citizens in an organised way, defend these laws. It would be very good for Poland to have such organisation in KOD - for the protection of the rule of law under the government of different political parties.

If you agree with my advice, then I wish you all the best in making it work.