

# NBP

## Narodowy Bank Polski

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### **Report on the debate on**

***„Polonia Quo Vadis” [Where are you heading Poland],***

**which took place on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November 2009 at the headquarters of**

**the Polish Economic Society in Warsaw at Nowy Świat 49**

### **Introduction to the debate was made by:**

Prof. Antoni Kukliński

Marcin Piątkowski, Ph.D.

**The debate was chaired by:** Prof. Elżbieta Mączyńska, President of the Polish Economic Society

The debate concerned Poland's future, opportunities and threats to development and its scenarios.

Prof. A. Kukliński in his introduction demonstrated two possible roads leading to the turning point, through the Gordian knots mechanism or through the growth paths mechanism. There is an immense lack of strategic thinking in the EU. The European Union does not have a vision of the world up till 2050 and more over is afraid of this vision. At the same time there are countries that in an extraordinary way take advantage of their potential (Finland). Poland is a country that is more imitative than innovative and falls behind other EU countries. The transformation period should be positively perceived; however, the missed opportunities should also be noted. The next twenty years can be a breakthrough period for Poland, this can be civilisation leap forward (we may duplicate Finland's success). Another vision involves a stagnation society (the economy may run aground). The recent European Union elections have proved that we may expect a survival vision rather than radical changes in the European

Union. We must get used to living in a multi-civilization world. We should ponder the future identity of Poland and its role in 20, 30 or 40 years.

M. Pawłowski spoke about numerous English-language publications on the subject of America's, Europe's, China's, India's and other countries' future and pointed to the scarcity of publications on Poland in this respect. We are on the peripheries of the discussion on this subject. We should positively appraise the last twenty years of Poland's development. Never has Poland, in terms of economy, been in its history so close to Europe as today. Poland has achieved the highest – 80 per cent GDP growth. Poland is a main actor in the world's civilisation – in culture, economy and politics. Poland has never been doing better in catching up with others like in the past twenty years. However, there are threats for the future – lack of strategic thinking and lack of determination to implement the assigned objectives. Such determination was demonstrated by Asiatic countries and Finland. Poland should also strive at increasing population since Poland's population may shrink to as low as 32 million. Pro-family policy will not help much – Poland should rather open its borders to immigrants. We should value our membership in the European Union and consistently implement integration processes. We perceive our membership through immediate benefits (EU funds) but the institutions and rules of law, of which Poland was deprived, are even more important. The poor countries have always gained after they joined the club of the rich.

The discussion on the above mentioned topics was joined by 11 discussants. It was said that Poland should be bound for development –this would be a way to success. It is however, hampered by the poorly developed over transition science and education, and the extinguished social trust. The real GDP indexes for the last twenty years were questioned because of the very low level of GDP in 1989 and over the whole decade of the 1980s. The real-life actions cannot be based on one particular economic doctrine. One should be a pragmatist and reach for various sources and propose to the public a clear central idea. One should not fiercely juxtapose imitation to innovation. The less developed countries should take advantage of the well developed countries' wealth. Recommended here is innovative imitation – see Japan. Even if the present situation in Poland as a UE member is relatively good it may change in the future. This is demonstrated by arrogance of new superpowers and their leaders. We should not be satisfied with successes so far because the feeling of success produces indolence and also because our successes are relative – (the gap between Poland and Germany is increasing). It is not possible to carry out pro-development and pro-innovation actions from government' position – there must be formed a mechanism combining measures, ideas and potential for their implementation. Technological parks serve as a positive example here. There is an

urgent need for a deliberate immigration policy, it is feared that immigrants from culturally alien zones would come to Poland. There is a need to redefine Polish identity. So far, the marriage of democracy and capitalism seems to be a story of the past mainly because of the situation in China. The Poles must learn to take advantage of the European Union institutional system.