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**Information on the debate on
„Strategic Issues of Development of Higher Education in Poland”
which took place under the Strategic Thought Forum at
Polish Economic Society headquarters at Nowy Świat 49 in Warsaw**

Introduction to the debate was made by:

Prof. Barbara Kudrycka, Minister of Science and Higher Education

The debate was chaired by:

Prof. Antoni Kukliński, President of the Polish Society for Co-operation with the Club of Rome

Prof. B. Kudrycka started her address with a reference to a widespread discussion on the strategy of development of science and higher education in Poland till 2020. Most unfortunately, since 1989 Poland has not developed such strategy and this should be considered as a serious mistake. Presently, two strategies are being developed making a headway for the work of government. The first, called “The 2010 – 2020 Strategy for the Development of Higher Education “ was prepared by the Foundation of Poland’s Rectors. The second was prepared by Ernst & Young and the Gdansk Institute for Market Economics. Both strategies as well as some other are scrutinized by experts. The Ministry is open to proposals and remarks made by scientific centres. The proposals will be considered during development of the final strategy due to be completed within two years.

The Ministry, considering their own analyzes, studies and materials produced by the OECD, the World Bank and the European Commission came to the conclusion that it is necessary to change all areas of operation of higher education institutions. Therefore, it is necessary to improve quality of research, education and cooperation with socio-economic environment. One way of implementing this goal is to select the strongest research teams and support them with increased funding. When the funds for higher education institutions are limited support for the best research centres and best teachers seems to be the most appropriate solution.

In the next few years the Ministry will focus on increased efficiency of operation of higher education institutions. This will especially concern public institutions where effectiveness of employment of government funding remains much to desire. Public institutions will hold two separate bank accounts, one for government funds and the other for other funds raised by these institutions. Moreover, increased transparency will be required for operations carried out by higher education institutions, both in terms of human resource policy and in terms of managing these institutions and their public funds.

This is an ambition of the Ministry to have the flagship institutions rank high in the European ranking prepared at the moment by France. It is a challenge for the Ministry and for the academic circle to introduce knowledge, innovation and intellectual capital to priorities of the Poland's presidency in the European Union. This will enable to increase Poland's involvement in the European Union operations in science and education. Poland has some remarkable achievements in the EU Knowledge and Innovation Communities formed by scholars from many higher education institutions and institutional sectors. The scholars work successfully on sustainable and advanced low- carbon technologies. This is the only EU Knowledge and Innovation Community among the new EU countries.

The address of the Minister of Science and Higher Education was followed by discussion with 14 disputants. The discussion focused on the address and issues of higher education in Poland. It was considered vital to prepare a solid diagnosis of higher education. It was stressed that education system in Poland is rather reluctant to changes. It was also noted that while the number of students in Poland rose 5 times the number of teachers rose only by 60 per cent which must have had an adverse effect on the quality of graduates. Students come to get their diplomas - not get solid knowledge. It was a false move to cancel vocational education and examination for

secondary-school certificate in mathematics. Too little attention was paid to exclusive education and only such can compete in the world market. The lack of system encouraging companies and institutions to take advantage from achievements of science and hence to finance research was a serious mistake. One cannot expect further development of science in the situation when scholars, due to their poor financial situation, must work at many various education institutions at the same time. On the other hand, the share of GDP for higher education has been decreasing for many years. This might have been caused by the lack of appropriate strategy.