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Gala Dinner Keynote Speech

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my pleasure to welcome you at the Eurofi Gala Dinner, which for years has been a good debate venue for all relevant stakeholders of the European financial world.

In Europe, we do have a lot to discuss, given the volatile geopolitical and economic situation. We are waking up each morning and checking the news. In this environment, a cool head and a well calculated response is what should lead our European reactions to the current situation.

Well, we are in Europe. For the last couple of decades our hallmark has been stability. It allowed us to live a prosperous life. A good life, especially as we compare our situation to other regions. Even if in financial markets we usually compare ourselves to some more developed regions, it is only now that we will see the advantages of our position.

Being from Poland, I must add that this is stability in a free market economy. Before 1989, in Poland and a few other current EU members states, as well as in countries outside the EU, we had one of a different kind – the stability of a centrally commanded economy. This economic system failed, and we can testify to that. There was no financial system in communism, which was perhaps one of the reasons why it failed, but I assure you there would not be a job for you in that system. We are in a free market economy now. Our wealth has been enabled to a great extent by the underlying architecture of European

economies based on free markets, on the single market in the EU, and other freedoms.

Let me now say some unscripted words. We should now appreciate our political system in the EU, which is usually said to be slow, inefficient, and creating some burdensome solutions. As I am running trilogues during the Polish presidency, I can testify that it is a long process in terms of getting any legislative act done. We were very often critical about this system, but it provides for stability. Nobody in the EU would be able to turn around the whole political landscape overnight. This stability is very important, because it is what the financial system needs. This is our comparative advantage in Europe.

Here I would like to reiterate what my boss, minister of finance Andrzej Domański, highlighted in his opening speech: "Free trade is more than an economic principle — it is a path to opportunity, innovation, and lasting prosperity. Free trade brought up billions of people out of poverty". Therefore, we need now less emotion, and more focus on economic growth. Our discussions need to be translated into action. Many European leaders, including in my government, understand the current momentum in terms of a European awakening – or a kind of European renaissance. Only history will tell, but it is giving us now a good kick, and we have to find the way ahead and capture opportunities.

From the perspective of the

financial world, there are two areas that need our immediate attention: simplification of rules and equity culture.

First, removing unnecessary burden from companies' shoulders will give them more space and resources to focus on value creation. This however has to be done in an orderly manner. We have to simplify what's unnecessary and change our approach to law-making so that is more result-oriented rather than prescriptive. But we have to do it using our minds, not chainsaws.

In the context of 27 Member States, with their variety of financial habits and economic structures, one-size solutions do not always work. A single market requires convergence of practices and a working level of standardization to guarantee frictionless economy. Yet, EU-wide policy frameworks have to be balanced with national-level flexibility.

This approach is also relevant in the second area, that is in the area of European capital markets. Europeans have to be nudged to invest. We need to create conditions for greater investment in the real economy. In that respect, long-term saving products, adjusted to national needs, offer a much-needed solutions to channel households' savings to productive investments and address the growing pension gap in the EU's ageing society.

While changing the course of policies in Europe, we have to

steer clear of unstable waters. The response to all geopolitical and economic challenges should not derail our financial and fiscal stability. Only economically strong nations can have a strong impact on how their citizens and companies fare. I would like to emphasise from the bottom of my heart, given my current position, that soundness determines the Ministry of Finance's actions, while we take care of financial stability in cooperation with all institutions in Poland.

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to conclude with the words of a well-known song by the famous Polish poet and singer Wojciech Młynarski, which symbolized an attitude in the difficult times of communism. The main line in the song that we used to sing was "Let's do our job properly". This is what I wish for all of us.

Welcome to Warsaw, and thank you for coming here.

Thank you, Eurofi.