

APPEAL OF CEZARY KAŻMIERCZAK, PRESIDENT OF THE UNION OF ENTREPRENEURS AND EMPLOYERS, TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION REGARDING THE EUROPEAN RECOVERY FUND

Madame Commissioner,

The last couple of years has been an exceptionally tough time for both Europe and the entire world. The challenges that stem from the coronavirus pandemic are not only health-related but also of a social and economic nature. Widespread recession, albeit short-lived, made it necessary to undertake non-standard measures in the field of monetary and fiscal policy. Launching immense aid programmes for enterprises and maintaining exceptionally low-interest rates have saved many businesses from bankruptcy and communities from impoverishment. However, they have not entirely mitigated the negative impact the pandemic has been exerting on economies. In many countries, the pandemic has highlighted the necessity of major reforms to the healthcare system, public services, or digitisation of public offices in the most brutal way.

All this led the European Union to propose an ambitious aid programme for Member States to help post-pandemic recovery. It is to be achieved, among others, by the Recovery and Resilience Facility.

In the preamble to the regulation establishing the Facility, it is stated that it aims to provide “effective and significant financial support to step up the implementation of sustainable reforms and related public investments in the Member States” and its ultimate objective is “to tackle the adverse effects and consequences of the COVID-19 crisis in the Union”.

The nature of the challenges the Facility is addressing is beyond politics. A consensus was achieved regarding the need to rebuild and maintain the competitiveness of the European Union and its economic cohesion, which goes beyond current national policies. Therefore, I am deeply convinced that the actual implementation of the Facility, by providing Member States with the funds allocated to them, should disregard the current relations between European institutions and representatives of individual countries.

It is no secret that there are disputes between certain Member States and the European Commission regarding, inter alia, the principles on the functioning of the Community or restrictions of individual countries’ sovereignty. In the case of Poland, this discussion to the greatest degree revolves around the changes introduced to the judicial system. In any well-functioning organisation, a dispute is nothing out of the ordinary. We should not avoid it, and all parties involved have the undisputed right to formulate opinions (even adamant ones) or to draw conclusions and consequences in the scope of mutual relations.

For this reason, I am increasingly concerned that the Recovery and Resilience Facility, despite its essentially apolitical nature, has become part of the ongoing dispute between the Polish government and the European Commission, and an argument of sort. Hence, I would like to express my strong opposition to this practice.

Social partners in Poland have frequently commented on the so-called reform of the judiciary system in recent years. However, I cannot accept a situation in which citizens of Poland and Polish businesses have become hostage to a largely political dispute between EU bodies and the Polish government. Discourse on the rule of law or the principles of the functioning of the EU can and should continue. I am convinced, however, that the European Commission has a full range of measures at its disposal to advocate its reasoning without endangering the Polish – and, consequently, the European – economy, risking a slower come back to the path of growth disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

I call for the funds entirely due to Poland, which completed all the procedures required by the relevant regulation, to be mobilised under the Recovery and Resilience Facility and stop using them to influence the Polish government. Such practices can only reinforce the narrative of distrust aimed at EU institutions and lead to further polarization in relations between Poland and the EU, as well as among Polish citizens itself. At the end of the day, it is the Polish citizens and entrepreneurs, who will lose the most.

Yours faithfully,

Cezary Kaźmierczak

President of the Union of Entrepreneurs and Employers