

# **Xth National Congress of Delegates of NSZZ "Solidarność" Jastżebie Zdrój, 24-24.IX.1998**

## **Address of the Prime Minister Jerzy Buzek to the Delegates of the Congress**

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Friends,

I am deeply honoured by the fact that I can, for the second time, address you at "Solidarnosc" Congress as the Prime Minister of the Government of Poland, as the Prime Minister of the Government created by "Solidarnosc" Electoral Action thanks to the victory, another victory of "Solidarnosc".

We were a trade union and a big social movement which played deciding role in restoring of Polish independence, restoring freedom and dignity of everyone of us, in preparing of our country for another historic chance.

The today's chance is the creation of a modern state with efficient economy, but a state that is guided by basic ethical principles springing from the Christian values. The accession of Poland to NATO and European Union, permanent inclusion of our country into the western economic system and security system - to face this trial we need a strong and efficient state.

"Solidarnosc" participated in the restoration of independent and democratic Poland, but its mission is not over.

When the political class lacked imagination and the great enthusiasm of the society was lost due to dispersion and quarrels of the post-"Solidarnosc" parties - it was the Union that led to creation of the victorious AWS. Having won the elections this political group consisting of trade unionists, politicians and intellectualises started deep reform of the state.

During the last year more was done that in the previous four years. And all that was done is a concrete fulfilment of the proposals we had in the elections in 1997, fulfilment of the ideals of serving to Poland, broadening of civil rights and protecting of Polish family.

We started the reform of state administration, we decentralised the state deeply. Thanks to this reform huge amount of public financial means, means often wasted by the central administration, means used earlier to pay-off political favours, were brought to the local level closer to the citizens.

The transformation of social insurance system and health insurance system has started. Both reforms bring to the Poles the freedom of choice and freedom of disposal of the fruits of their own work.

The reform of education system restores the parents' influence on the way their children are taught and educated, but it is also supposed to rebuild the dignity of the teachers and will also effect in the increase of the teachers' incomes.

The fifth great reform is the economic transition, from restructuring of whole sectors to the reform of the law and elimination of bureaucracy in the economy.

We are also working on the reform of the tax system. We want a system that strengthens Polish family and will integrate the family, not atomise. We want lower taxes, which is important for Polish homes and for increase of entrepreneurship. We want a system that protects the poorest.

In the second half of July the Ministry of Treasury publicly announced the value of the national assets. In 4 months we did what no-one else could do, or maybe no-one wanted to do in 4 years. We know the value of our assets. Fixing the price of the state assets is the key to privatisation, to fulfilling the social obligations and finally to affranchisement of the citizens. The means earned from the privatisation will be used in the reform of the pension system. In this way the benefits from the national assets will return, in the form of high pensions, to the people that created the assets - to all of us.

Another big economic task is restructuring of Polish agriculture. This is our further programme.

One year ago one could doubt in the possibility of realisation of so ambitious plans, but in the light of all that has already been done we can firmly say - we will do that for sure!

I was with you in the 80's and 90's, now as the Prime Minister of "Solidarnosc" Electoral Action I want to stress the commitment of my Government to abide by the rules of social dialogue and defending of workers interests. The Government, according to the earlier commitments, is preparing a modern legislation referring to the industrial relations and to the dialogue with the social partners. The Parliament will soon receive the bill on the Tripartite Commission for the Social and Economic Issues which is supposed to work out independent opinions on all the actions that can affect Polish workers.

A modern state needs a strong and responsible trade union because it needs strong partners that could discuss the most important problems of the country - not weak organisations presenting contradicting interests and interested in the development of its own structures. "Solidarnosc" is such a strong and responsible trade union, it is a demanding by loyal partner.

At the end I would like to congratulate Marian Krzaklewski being elected for the chair of president of NSZZ "Solidarnosc". This choice for the Government, for me personally, means the programme continuity of the Union referring to the best traditions of "Solidarnosc". It is also the expression of respect of the Delegates for the big success of unification of Polish right-wing parties, the commitment to continue this way, the announcement of our future victories. It is also the expression of big responsibility for the future of Poland.

In this place I would like to stress that from my many years experience I know that the work of the members of NSZZ "Solidarnosc" and the people originating from the Union in Polish policy-making is not a work for short-term victories. We all, being in the Union or being politicians, realise that undertaking the big task to rebuild Poland is start the work that will be fruitful for our families, for our children, for the new generation of Poles. To complete this task, to rebuild a good, honest, strong and just state - we have to co-operate with NSZZ "Solidarnosc". As we originate from "Solidarnosc", the dialogue with the Union is a guarantee of realisation of our plans of building great, wealthy and safe Poland.