

A PLEA OF THE INSTITUTE OF LIBERAL THOUGHT [PL: INSTYTUT MYŚLI LIBERALNEJ]

Dear Deputies

Heads of Parliamentary Clubs

Heads of the Sejm's Commissions

It is with great concern that we have familiarized ourselves with the information that a legislative draft intended, in reality, to limit the role of American capital in the Polish electronic media, has been filed with the Sejm.

We are asking for works on this draft to be ceased.

It would be difficult to send a more clear signal to foreign investors that American capital is not welcome in Poland. Meanwhile, investments from the U.S. are some of the most important investments for the Polish economy. The joint value of the commercial projects financed by American entrepreneurs currently exceeds PLN 250 billion (approx. USD 70 billion). Thanks to these funds, Polish companies have access to the newest technologies, rules of social responsibility of business, and methods of ensuring fair free market competition. American investments in Poland also result in creating at least 300 000 jobs.

If the result of introducing the act would be a withdrawal of American investors from the Polish market, then the consequences of such action would be catastrophic for the Polish economy.

The draft shows that the consequences of its adoption will in particular concern the TVN and TVN24 television stations. This will lead to a particularly harmful limitation of freedom of the media. It ought to be noted, that the American capital present in TVN and TVN24 constitutes not only an investment into the advertising market and access to information. Above all, it is a guarantee of freedom of speech and the highest journalistic standards. It also allows for opinion journalism on the highest level, knowledge about the world, spreading of Polish and foreign culture, to be made available to viewers.

Despite the fact that television programs on these stations – unlike on TVP – are not financed with the use of public funds, they provide programs and documentaries on important and current issues concerning the Polish and international community. All these values may only be met whenever pluralism of the media is ensured. And the presence of American capital and American standards of freedom of speech constitutes one of the most important elements of this pluralism.

We are aware of the fact that information provided by irresponsible and unreliable media is being used to cause asymmetric threats or even hybrid conflicts. However, it is difficult to accuse American television stations of favoring similar activities.

More so, since the manipulation of information may not be prevented by stigmatizing any capital. Objectivity is guaranteed by pluralism and a fair discussion in the media, well-thought press law, and the culture of compliance with said law, as well as reasonable licensing procedures.

In view of both the interest of the Polish economy and the need to ensure pluralism in the Polish mass media, we are asking for works on such dangerous draft to be ceased. At the same time, we are asking the members of the parliamentary clubs and commissions presided by you to familiarize themselves with our plea.

Sincerely

On behalf of the Institute of Liberal Thought

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