

Businesses need more freedom: Report



People in Poland appreciate the business community's contribution to the economy, but the gap is still wide between Poland and the most business-friendly countries in Europe, according to a new survey probing the public's attitude to entrepreneurship after the fall of communism. A better education on entrepreneurship is needed to overcome business-related stereotypes that linger among Poles.

The survey findings are contained in a report put together by the Polish Business Roundtable (PRB) and the Civil Development Forum (FOR) as part of the Polish Business Roundtable's program to promote entrepreneurship in Poland. The report, which was unveiled in late February, offers an insight into what Polish people really know about free enterprise and what role they believe business has played in the country's development since 1989.

According to Małgorzata Adamkiewicz, vice-president of the Polish Business Roundtable, Polish businessmen can take much of the credit for the country's sustainable economic growth. "We are also convinced that offering a better education to the youngest generation and building an entrepreneurial ethos is of key importance to Poland's economic growth and crucial to saving the country from the middle-income trap," Adamkiewicz said.

The report seeks to encourage a debate on ways of promoting entrepreneurship and strengthening the entrepreneurial ethos among the Polish public.

"The Polish economy will only be as strong as the companies it is made of," said Jacek Szwajcowski, CEO of the Polish Business Roundtable. "Companies are where jobs are created, innovation is developed and social change initiated. Our ambition as the Polish Business Roundtable is to raise the awareness of how important entrepreneurship is to modern economies. We believe this will result in a higher number of new businesses and will enable Poland to continue its stable development."

A large part of the report concerns young people, seeking to establish what they know about free enterprise and the role of entrepreneurship in the economy. The report shows that only 53 percent of those aged 15-19 realize that businesses generate the bulk of Poland's GDP. To compare, the figure for the Polish population as a whole is 72 percent, a disproportion that could indicate that entrepreneurial education needs a boost in Polish schools.

One in two respondents to the survey gave an affirmative answer when asked if Polish employers paid their dues on time ("Yes, probably" and "Yes, definitely"). However, when asked about their own bosses, 89 percent of respondents said "yes." According to those polled, only 41 percent of Poland's employers keep accurate records of working time, but 81 percent said "yes" when the question was narrowed down to their own bosses.

Source: The Warsaw Voice