

## PUBLIC LECTURE

# 25 years of the Polish journey to democracy and the free market

## Andrzej Olechowski

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**Wednesday, 08 October 2014, 18:00 - 19:00pm**  
**Rm CPD 2.37, 2/F, Jockey Club Tower, Centennial Campus**  
**The University of Hong Kong**

The massive shifts in global economic power are bringing about major instability in global political system. The unipolar moment is coming to an end. Asia is searching for a new balance. Authoritarian Russia is attempting to regain its global status. Uncertainty and tension is becoming the new normal, in particular in Asia. Nationalism is on the rise. Authoritarian capitalism is being offered as an alternative to liberal democracy. Threats to democracy and prosperity are building up. Seen from the Polish perspective these developments are confusing and alarming. Twenty-five years ago Poles appointed the first non-communist prime minister in a Warsaw Pact country and started their journey into uncharted waters of the globalizing world. Today, Poland, in contrast with several of its neighbors, is a stable state, a free and vibrant society and an increasingly prosperous economy. It owes that success to a strict adherence to the democratic and market principles. Poland's experience provides a telling contribution to a debate about the potential consequences of the current tendencies in the global politics.

**Dr. Andrzej Olechowski** is Chairman of the Supervisory Board of Bank Handlowy, a Director of Euronet and a Member of the Supervisory Board of P4. He sits on the International Advisory Panel of Macquarie European Infrastructure Funds. He is Chairman of the Polish Group in the Trilateral Commission and a member of European Council on Foreign Relations. A former Minister of Foreign Affairs (1993-95) and Minister of Finance (1992), he was a candidate in Presidential elections (2000 and 2010) and a founder of the Civic Platform.

His previous positions include Chairman of the City Council in Wilanów (1994-98), Economic Advisor to President Lech Wałęsa (1992-93; 1995), Secretary of State for Foreign Economic Relations (1991-92), Deputy Governor, National Bank of Poland (1989-91). He served as a Member of Supervisory Boards of Vivendi, PKN Orlen, LOT and ABB Poland. He was a Senior Advisor to the EBRD and a Member of the Advisory Boards of Goldman Sachs, Creditanstalt, Banca Nazionale del Lavoro, Textron, IFC and Citigroup Europe.

Educated at the Central School of Planning and Statistics (Ph.D., 1979), he is a professor at Vistula University and the author of a number of publications on international trade and foreign policy.

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