

„The Economist”, July 19th 2014 (<http://www.economist.com/news/letters/21607757-letters-editor>)

Poland's past and future,



SIR – I ought to be happy with *The Economist's* comments about the impressive progress Poland has made over the past 25 years ([Special report on Poland](#), June 28th). We deserve the appreciation. However, to be frank, your hyper-positive evaluation would be disputed by many. Such enthusiasm is not shared by all. If it was, more than 2m mostly young and educated people wouldn't have left Poland for the West over the past decade.

It is also wrong to claim that “rigorous economic shock therapy in the early 1990s put Poland on the right track”. Absolutely, it did not. This ill-advised policy, based on a post-Communist version of the Washington consensus, drove Poland to a devastating slumpflation. The illusory expectations of the government and its foreign advisers were not met. Poland's relative success has come about not because of “shock therapy” but despite it. Our achievements are based on an unorthodox new pragmatism, policies that aim gradually for a social market economy and sustained growth, and at a fair shot at participating in the globalisation process.

So forget about the shock and focus on the therapy.

Professor Grzegorz Kolodko

Former deputy prime minister and finance minister of Poland

Warsaw