

Press release

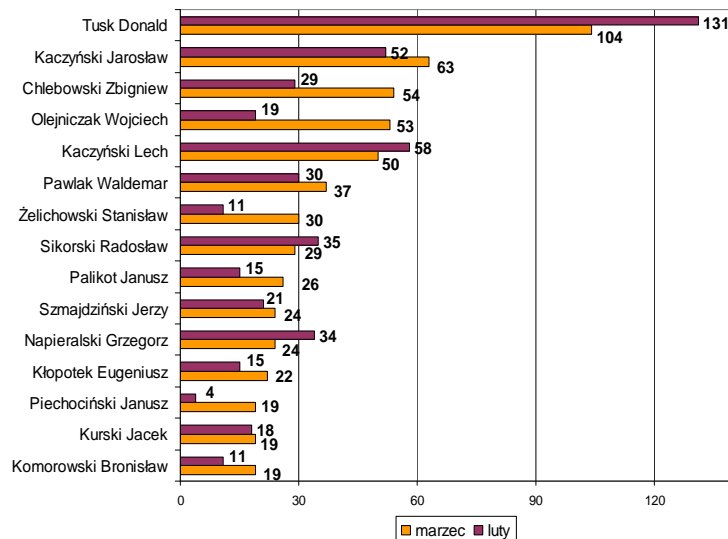
Warsaw, 9 April 2009

Money, love and politics

The month of March saw the media dominated by comments on the coming European parliamentary elections. Politicians also referred to tensions between the coalition partners Polish People's Party (PSL) and Civic Platform (PO) – 128 media pieces, and the problem of nepotism among politicians. Donald Tusk still leads the rankings, although his media activity has significantly declined. Furthermore, there has been surprising reshuffle among the top five. As Wiesław Gałązka, comments *unlike it was February the President was not present in the media very often in March. He made 50 public appearances, which is 8 less than in the month before. Lech Kaczyński was outdone by his brother, who appeared in the media 63 times, 11 more than in February. Donald Tusk was economical with words too –104 appearances, a decrease by 27. The difference is that the Prime Minister had more reasons to keep quiet or rather pass certain issues in silence, vide the problem of ethical standards not only in his own party, but PO's coalition partner, the leader of which was reproached by the press for too personal engagement in business relations involving the state money.*

Like in the month before, on top of the February rankings by the Institute of Media Monitoring is PM Donald Tusk. He made 104 appearances on the air of prime news programmes. His runner-up is Jarosław Kaczyński (63 appearances), third on the list being Zbigniew Chlebowski (54). Up to the fourth position advanced Wojciech Olejniczak (53). To complete the top five is President Lech Kaczyński (50), whose media activity significantly dropped in relation to the month before.

Chart 1. Television appearances of politicians in February and March 2009.



Source: IMM

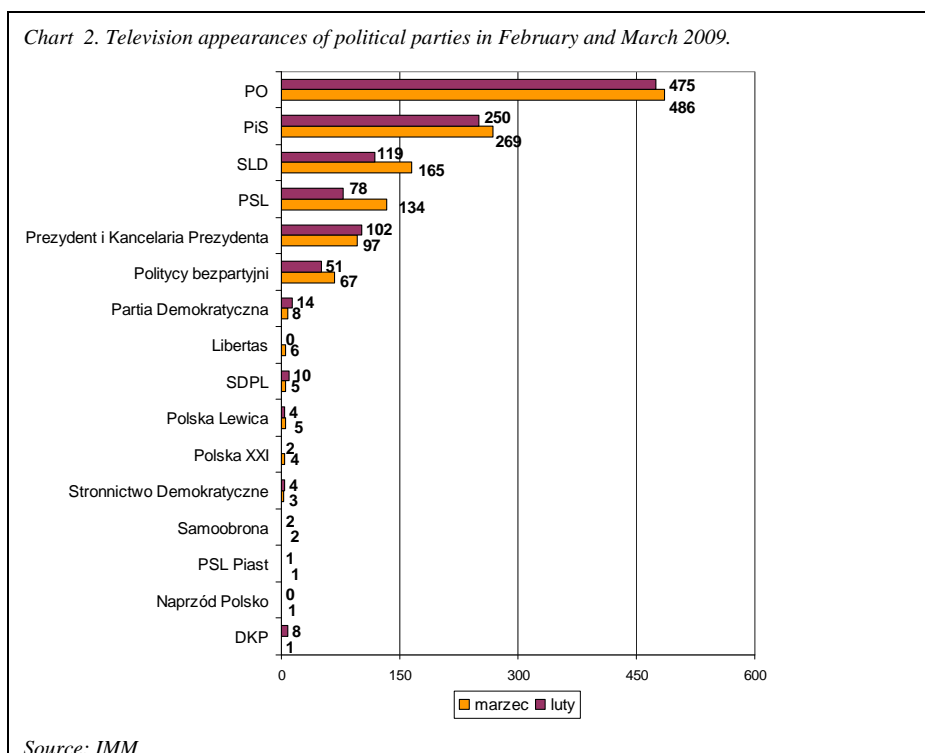
According to Wiesław Gałązka, money can be considered the main contributory factor in the March findings. An obvious thing is that key drivers for the rises and falls are power and money, but it is the latter that prevailed in the past month. One can say that money shook the Polish political scene.

It all started with nepotism. First, this kind of accusation was made towards Waldemar Pawlak, then the problem was presented [56 media pieces] as an element of the folklore of his political camp, a group of resourceful people which know how to reap and use a scythe, sometimes sticking it up. The affair was surprising to Władysław Frasyniuk, a former representative of the working class. He has apparently forgotten the lecture of the philosopher from Trier, who has once said that as long as a peasant labours, he is a proletarian, but once he starts selling his products, he becomes an uncompromising capitalist. At that opportunity, the media also reminded the famous and infamous deeds, one can read about in Żeromski's novels, of forerunners of the people's party of today.

It is also worth adding that Waldemar Pawlak aroused media attention by his aversion to being guarded by the Government Protection Bureau (BOR) he is entitled to, whereas Jarosław Kaczyński, who demanded protection due to him resembling the President, just lost his large guarding team in March. Unfortunately, nobody praised Waldemar Pawlak for saving the public money, as he commutes to work in Warsaw by rail, not a limousine. Neither enthusiasm of the media or the opposition was raised by the fact he had encouraged his mother to run a business. In result, the Deputy Prime Minister felt he had to apologise for having "mom".

Thus, it is not surprising that, given the circumstances, the PM tried not to comment on entrepreneurship of his coalition partners. It should not be overlooked that at that time his party started facing dark clouds of the approaching storm related to senator Misiak [54 media pieces], who proved that it is not only rural residents of the people's party that know how to make a profitable deal.

The affair of Misiak made observers suspect that the reason for the PM not commenting on the case of Pawlak was the intention to draw attention of the public and the media on the problem of nepotism in the rural circles, so as to make the urban one look less serious. Simultaneously, the improving image of the potential rival in the presidential elections would be impaired. This seems all the more probable, when we add that the Deputy Prime Minister's entourage began to spread an opinion that the ruling party had "a mole" who steals the best legislation ideas from PSL.



The party which had the most representatives on air of the four analysed news programmes in March is PO. On the podium were also PiS and Democratic Left Alliance (SLD). Politicians of PSL were more active than in February which helped them get ahead of the President and members of his Chancellery once again. It came to this thanks to increased activity of Stanisław Żelichowski, Eugeniusz Kłopotek and Janusz Piechociński. They delivered comments on the nepotism accusations against Waldemar Pawlak and the recurring information on troubles within the ruling coalition. The month of March saw two new parties classified, the reason being the approaching Europarliamentary elections. A surprising thing though is that both camps: Libertas and Naprzód Polsko are strongly eurosceptic.

Coming back to the hottest issue of March, that is money, it has to be stressed that the media covered such a spectacular event as opening a bank account by Jarosław Kaczyński and the fact that he made an online purchase of a book by Barack Obama and an album of Raz, Dwa, Trzy band, the leader of which was not glad about which. The PiS leader did that without drinking beer and visiting “embarrassing” sites, which, as he has once said, is what people mostly use the Internet for. The issue needs to be mentioned, because the Central Statistical Office (GUS) is going to meticulously screen the wealth and private plans of citizens, as it carries out the national census in the future. This might be an important piece of news for those living in concubinage, which was another hot issue in the media in March.

The question of the politics of love came up in March in various contexts, and various mutations. So we had the one everybody knows that is Lech Wałęsa’s love to himself, which was injured by a copier operator, whom some consider a historian [28 media pieces]. We also had the love the President and the Prime Minister demonstrated during they “two-men official trips”. The PM said: „On the whole, I try to like people, Lech Kaczyński included”. Well, it is good to know the PM tries at all. The heat of fight for power does not go with softening of the image, does it. This is something all politicians should never forget”, adds Gałazka.

Apart from the question of possible emigration of Lech Wałęsa, the top fifteen most frequently covered issues included: the Europarliamentary elections, conflicts in the PO-PSL coalition and future nomination of the new NATO’s chief.

For the purpose of the present study analysed were prime news programmes aired on nationwide television stations: TVP1 (“Wiadomości”), TVP2 (“Panorama”), TVN (“Fakty”) and Polsat (“Wydarzenia”) in the period of 1-31 March 2009. Politicians appeared on air of the above-mentioned programs 1254 times: 407 times on TVN’s “Fakty”, 313 on Polsat’s “Wydarzenia”, 262 on TVP1’s “Wiadomości” and 272 on TVP2’s “Panorama”.

The Institute of Media Monitoring monitors over 900 press titles, 84 television and radio stations as well as 2000 websites. IMM is a member of FIBEP – an elite association of 91 media monitoring companies from 41 countries. Since 2002 the Institute of Media Monitoring has supported the Responsible Business Forum.