

**Address by President of the Republic of Poland**  
**Mr Andrzej Duda on the occasion of the New Year`s**  
**meeting with the Diplomatic Corps**

Presidential Palace, 14 January 2019

Your Excellency, Most Reverend Sir, Dean of the Diplomatic Corps,  
Your Excellencies, the Ambassadors,  
Honourable Marshal,  
Honourable Prime Ministers,  
Excellencies, Most Reverend Bishops,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Madam Justice of the Constitutional Court,  
Generals,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to our fourth joint New Year`s meeting. 2018 is over, a year rich in numerous events, out of which the most significant, truly momentous ones for us, were undoubtedly the celebrations of the centenary of regaining independence. I wish to thank you warmly for making our jubilee visible also in your home countries; it was often an occasion for grand festivities and joy.

Last year we commenced our 2-year-long, non-permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council, whereas in Katowice we presided over the session of the 24<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Its successful outcome was reflected in the adoption of the so called Katowice Rulebook, which was possible thanks to the readiness for compromise demonstrated by all parties participating in the negotiations. I would like to thank your countries for cooperation and for expressing acknowledgment of our good and effective organization of the Katowice conference.

The year 2018 was marked, once again, by high level of my international activity. Throughout the whole year I paid 26 foreign visits, and met with more than 20 international leaders who visited Poland.

I feel personal satisfaction with the fact that my visits and discussions with foreign partners, apart from the political content, are also enhancing our security, including the energy one, and producing tangible economic benefits. I am glad that last year turned out, once again, positive for Poland in that respect. We joined the group of developed economies, with our GDP reaching 5%, and Polish businesses recording a systematic growth in exports.

Furthermore, last year, we managed to sign long-term contracts for LNG supplies which are significant for our energy security. That will allow for an effective diversification of energy supply sources, not just for Poland but for the whole region as well. It is one of the elements of cooperation we are developing within the framework of the Three Seas Initiative. I am pleased that at the meeting in Bucharest last year, the Initiative received stronger political support. We have also launched the process of implementing joint projects. I hope that this year we will be able to finalize works aimed at setting up the Three Seas Fund. That will constitute a major step in achieving more efficiency in the implementation of common economic and infrastructure-related projects.

Just like every other year, an important and fixed item on the agenda of my visits were meetings with my compatriots living outside their homeland. I am pleased that in the year of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of regained independence I was able to meet with Poles living in such places as Chicago or Vilnius, whereas in the course of the historic first official presidential visit to Australia and New Zealand I was meeting Polish community inhabiting Sydney as well as Auckland and Wellington.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

While 2018 was the year of celebrating our independence, the year 2019 is going to be the one of the centenary of the reborn and independent Polish diplomacy. One hundred years ago, in 1919, Poland actively started to establish diplomatic relations. I am pleased that your missions are preparing numerous anniversary events. Rest assured that I am supportive of these celebrations and stand ready to take patronage over them.

Excellencies,

Polish diplomacy is ready to consistently support good multilateral cooperation. The already quoted COP24 conference in Katowice as well as international events scheduled to take place in Poland this year, such as the conference on the Middle East and the Berlin Process Summit on Western Balkans, constitute our contribution to the development of multilateral diplomacy. We believe that this kind of diplomacy is feasible and that it can be effective. Nevertheless, it must be based on good bilateral relations, built on trust and international law. International law should be the tool for solving contentious issues. Diplomacy is the source of peace as long as it is based on international law.

The matter of the value of peace is obviously connected with a historical reflection provoked by the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the outbreak of WWII and the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising, which both fall in 2019. This year we are also going to commemorate other anniversaries of importance for Polish historical memory: that of the Battle of Monte Cassino, as well as that of the heroic fights of the division commanded by General Stanisław Maczek in the territories of Belgium and the Netherlands. I intend to pay my personal tribute to the Polish soldiers of those days in order to show our contribution to the building of a free world, as well as a safe and peaceful Europe. The heroism of Polish soldiers at Monte Cassino and in the fields of Normandy and Flanders secured us the right to decide about the security order in Europe.

While occupying our deserved place in the family of European nations, we want to actively join in the building of a common Europe. A historical source of our contribution to the discussion about EU's future is the heritage of the Union of Lublin, the 450<sup>th</sup> anniversary of which will be celebrated this year. The Union, entered into on 1 July 1569, at the session of the Sejm in Lublin, established a new state – the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. It came into being thanks to the union agreed on by the Polish, Lithuanian and Ruthenian, or in today's terms the Belorussian and Ukrainian, gentry. In that way, we jointly set an example to the then Europe showing that it was possible to achieve more than just a peaceful coexistence of various political traditions, cultures and religions. We proved something much more valuable: in the era of wars dividing the Old Continent, we demonstrated that a prudent and courageous policy founded upon the virtue of justice and led by the sense of common good is capable of creating an economic and political superpower and a mighty political force which the then Commonwealth was.

Those sources of the European unity were referred to by John Paul II when in his speech in St Peter`s Square he set the path “from the Union of Lublin to the European Union”. And he added that “Poland's entry into the structures of the European Union, with equal rights to the other countries, is for our nation and for the neighbouring Slav nations an expression of historical justice and, on the other hand, can constitute an enrichment for Europe. Europe needs Poland. Poland needs Europe!”. It was also in the diversity of experiences, traditions and cultures that the Pope saw a chance for greatness, making it also clear that “In the process of the continent's integration, it is of capital importance to remember that the union (...) must consist above all in an agreement about the values which must find expression in its law and in its life.”

We treat seriously the obligation imposed on us by John Paul II for we feel co-responsible for the future of the Community and wish for it to find the harmony of values as soon as this year. The nearest opportunity to do that will be provided by political changes connected both with the European Parliament elections, as well as the end of term of the incumbent European Commission and that of the President of the European Council. A new leadership of the main EU institutions should largely embark upon the task of bringing the European Union closer to its citizens and restoring the stability and internal balance which Europe whose absence is felt so much nowadays. Today is the time for the Republic of European Nations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We also define our geopolitical position through the membership of the North Atlantic Alliance, which celebrates its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. I would like the year 2019 to demonstrate to the world that NATO is a real alliance which ensures defence capabilities across its entire territory and effectively deters potential aggressors. Having said that, we must not forget that NATO has one more dimension to it – it is a keystone of strong transatlantic bonds. It shows that the civilization community to which Poland belongs extends on both sides of the Atlantic. For that reason, strengthening of the transatlantic bonds sets, and will continue to set, the main direction for our thinking about security. When joining NATO 20 years ago, Poland at the same time clearly declared that it is only within the structures of the Western world that it sees its place on the geopolitical map of Europe and the world. Only NATO, based on the

principle of allied solidarity, can provide a real guarantee of military security to Poland, to the region and to the entire West.

Over the last 3 years, also thanks to the diplomatic efforts and active leadership of Poland, the North Atlantic Alliance has been implementing important and necessary measures adapting it to negative developments in the security environment. The last Summits of the Alliance: in Wales, Warsaw and Brussels produced landmark decisions. We have returned to construing NATO mainly as a guarantor of security for its members. We have started actions aimed at ensuring an equal potential of NATO on all its flanks. We have undertaken true efforts to restore to the Alliance effective deterrence capabilities and the capacity to defend the territories of its member states. It is a positive start to the further adaptation of NATO to new geopolitical realities.

We are determined to continue cooperation with the Allies whose forces have been deployed to Poland and to other countries of our region. Let me use this opportunity and extend my profound gratitude to representatives of these countries. Last September, in Washington, I signed the renewed declaration on strategic cooperation with the United States. We hope that our enhanced partnership will result in a growing presence of US forces. I have no doubt that a close Polish-American military cooperation is the best response to the complex and long-term security threats, not only to Poland and the Eastern flank, but also to the entire NATO.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The transatlantic bond, like every bond binding close but independent states, requires a responsible approach by each party. We count on the United States not only maintaining but, in the context of Poland, also extending the scope of its partnership for the sake of Europe's security. The development of offensive capabilities by the countries who wish to destroy the existing international order, which builds on respect for the adopted principles and international law, demands strategic farsightedness and prudence. Stable and peaceful Europe is not only in the interest of the Europeans, but also of America, of the United States. Security across the entire transatlantic area is indivisible. To us, the Euro-Atlantic and the European strand in the security and defence cooperation remain to be inseparable and mutually complementary.

Given the context of the existing threats, we will also, as part of NATO's Eastern flank, consolidate the cooperation of the Bucharest 9. The meetings held so far have undoubtedly confirmed that it has grown to be the most important format of cooperation for the countries of the region, devoted to the subject of military security.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Poland is an active member of the international community and speaks out in matters of global importance. We have just started the second year of our membership in the UN Security Council – the only worldwide entity whose decisions are legally binding for the states, and whom the international community gave the right and obligation to react in order to defend international peace and security.

Poland treats its membership of the Council, first and foremost, as a huge obligation towards the international community and therefore it gets actively involved in its forum in such matters as: solving the conflict in Ukraine, protection of civilian population, respect for international law, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, prevention of conflicts and genocide. Last May, I had a chance to chair a high-level meeting on the strengthening of the role of international law. I wish to assure you that Poland is fully committed to the fulfilment of tasks arising under the UN Security Council agenda. In 2019, we will be active in presenting our priorities which will be reflected in the agenda of the August presidency of Poland in that body.

Our activeness in the UN forum demonstrates itself also through Poland's bid for membership in the Human Rights Council in 2020-22. Poland advocates a holistic definition of human rights, encompassing not merely social and economic rights, but also the inalienable civil and political rights. 70 years ago, UN adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It has a universal quality and formulates the concept of human rights which is valid until this day. We want to be actively involved in the works aimed at their promotion and protection. We do hope that our bid will be positively received during the voting and that a representative of Poland will be included among the Council's members.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Contemporary diplomacy comprises also the economic diplomacy. Also this year I will dedicate much time acting for the sake of promoting Polish businesses or, speaking in broader terms, of the Polish economy worldwide. As soon as next week, I will attend the Davos Economic Forum where, along with the top-level delegation, I will hold talks concerning Poland's activeness in the global economy.

Poland is a dynamically developing European country. It is an active member of the international community, carrying out its activities on all continents. I wish to assure you that the development of relations, including the economic ones, with non-European states alike, is of huge importance to us. We perceive it as a challenge and an opportunity at the same time. We are aware that in order to benefit from the economic development in many regions of the world, in terms of trade, investments or technology and development, we need to assume a more proactive attitude. Rest assured that we are going to strive at creating optimum conditions to ensure a profitable investment cooperation.

I encourage your embassies to organize business forums for Polish and international entrepreneurs. Even in the global digital economy, nothing can replace direct contacts and direct conversations.

Excellencies, the Ambassadors,  
All Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In conclusion, I would like to wish all those present a prosperous New Year 2019, full of challenges which will turn out successful. May the upcoming months be the time for forging and implementing ideas which will contribute to the prosperity of our states and societies.

All the best in the New Year!