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President Andrzej Duda marks Independence Day

Polish President Andrzej Duda on Wednesday took part in celebrations marking Poland's Independence Day. A strong state needs to be sensitive to every citizen and be based on strong economy, law and politics of history, the president stressed.

The ceremonial changing of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was attended, apart from President Duda, by former President Bronisław Komorowski, PM Ewa Kopacz, lower and upper house speakers and Church officials.

"A strong state (...) must be sensitive to every citizen and be based on strong foundations - the foundation of a strong economy that brings benefits to all and makes everyone more prosperous and raises the standards of living of the entire society, and not only a part of it."

A strong state also depends on a sustainable and stable legal system and adequate politics of history and patriotism, according to Duda. "That is what we are doing here now in this place," the president added.

"The most valuable thing for a nation is a free, sovereign and independent state. But this goes both ways - the most valuable thing in a state is its nation which feels free and is determined to keep, maintain and have its free and independent state. This is what we, Poles, have been like for generations, and we have the right to be proud of it," the president stressed. Duda reminded that Poles' actions led to the ultimate fall of the Iron Curtain and the Berlin Wall. "It all started from us. We need to remember about it and the world needs to remember about it."

At the conclusion of the ceremony, President Duda, Defence Minister Tomasz Siemoniak and Chief of the General Staff General Mieczysław Gocul lay a wreath at the monument to Poland's inter-war leader Marshal Józef Piłsudski.

Earlier on Wednesday the president presented state distinctions to people who had made special contribution to Poland. During the ceremony, Andrzej Duda said that independence is never given once and for all.

The president stressed the role of ordinary people in fighting for Polish independence, creating a community of generations and showing historical truth. "The motherland should pay homage to those who fell for it, but should also remember those who live for it and are among us."

Duda thanked the awardees, who represented the fields of culture, sports, politics, literature and science, for their achievements and courage in presenting their views and pursuing truth.



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Among those distinguished were Warsaw Uprising participant Brigadier Janusz Brochwicz-Lewinski and Archbishop Henryk Hoser.

The ceremony was also attended by the outgoing Senate Speaker Bogdan Borusewicz and the Senior Speaker of the new Senate Kornel Morawiecki.

The president started his Independence Day celebration from a holy mass held at the Church of the Holy Cross in Warsaw.

The National Independence Day is a public holiday in Poland celebrated every year on November 11 to commemorate the anniversary of Poland's regaining its independent statehood in 1918 after 123 years of partition by Russia, Prussia and Austria.

Source: PAP

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