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President: Poland will pursue pro-European policy

President Andrzej Duda has told the German "Der Spiegel" weekly that Poland will continue a pro-European policy. He declared his readiness to continue good relations with Germany but pointed out Berlin's lack of solidarity regarding the Nord Stream gas pipeline.

In an interview with the "Der Spiegel" weekly the Polish president criticised European Parliament head Martin Schulz for suggesting that the situation in Poland "carried the signs of a coup d'etat".

He stressed that many Poles received Schulz's words as a gross exaggeration and even "offensive to Poland and Polish citizens." Duda added that Schulz was a "leftist politician", belonging to a different political mainstream than the conservatives who won a recent general election in Poland. "I treat his comments as part of a political dispute, this is a part of politics," stated the president.

Andrzej Duda said that there was a dispute going on in Poland on the shape of the state. In his opinion recent demonstrations in Poland testified that "democracy was alive".

Speaking on international affairs, the president stressed: "We will pursue a firm pro-European policy. Poles want to be in the EU, they are aware of the benefits (resulting from EU membership) for our country."

Andrzej Duda added that allegations suggesting Poland's anti-Europeanism were unfounded and pointed out that in fact it was "certain Western European politicians who wanted to restrict the free movement of persons in Europe and were therefore attacking a key principle of the EU. Such statements are, in my opinion, anti-European," said the president.

He added that Poland wanted to contribute to the better protection of EU's external borders.

Asked whether Poland will accept seven thousand refugees, Andrzej Duda said that Poland was ready to accept "anyone in need of protection" but added that "so far almost no one voluntarily came here (to Poland)," and that the majority of migrants "has moved on to Germany."

The president stressed that migrants will "under no circumstances" be held in Poland against their will and assured that "those who come voluntarily and are in danger, will be protected."

Andrzej Duda said that Poland was not a country that only received EU help, but also a „contributor“. He explained that Western companies benefited from Poland's presence in the EU. "We also have received Ukrainian citizens fleeing war," the president added.

Asked about the deterioration of Polish-German relations in 2005-2007, the president said it was "an invention of the media." In this context he noted that his second foreign visit after taking office had been to Berlin.

"I had good talks. It is certain that Germany is an important partner with whom we want to have best relations." In reference to the Nord Stream 2 project Andrzej Duda admitted that Poland had expected more solidarity on

Germany's part. "I am openly saying: we had hoped for greater solidarity on the part of the Germans", Andrzej Duda said.

The Polish president expressed concern that "not only Germany but also other countries" will return to "business as usual" in their relations with Russia, and will want to lift sanctions. The president observed that this position was being represented in the European Parliament by, among others, Austria and Italy.

"Until stable peace is not a fact in Ukraine, sanctions must remain in force. This is consistent with the security interests of the whole of Europe," said the Polish president.

Source: PAP

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