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### President: Citizens should be proud of free Poland

**"May 3 Constitution used to be and remains important for us as society and a nation" President Andrzej Duda said during observances at Warsaw's Castle Square held on Wednesday to mark the 226th anniversary of the May 3 Constitution of 1791."**

"There are no foreign lords in Poland which means that Poland is a free country; Poland is growing strong", the president said.

"(It is) the government act - as it was called then - of which the Polish people are extremely proud today, and whose passage we observe as a holiday of the state, always in an independent Poland. And we also used to observe it in times when there was either no Poland or no independent Poland. We used to observe it even risking a deportation or one's life. Yes, it used to be and remains important for us as a nation", the president said.

"I would like to make it very clear: today's Poland is completely different from that in 1790-1791 - it is a free, sovereign and democratic Poland where the nation elects its authorities in general elections. It is a Poland that has its own army, it is a Poland that belongs to NATO", the president said in Warsaw's Castle Square.

President Duda praised the level of education of the Polish society and its awareness of the external reality. "Polish people are proud and Polish people are wise", President Duda stressed.

Still, "Poland today is not ideal", the president said, pointing to the multitude of tasks still ahead of the government.

"Poland today is a proud country, the Polish society is a society that is proud of its state, of its colours, of its history, of its citizens and its contribution to Europe and the world", the president added.

The May 3 Constitution was passed on May 3, 1791 by the Great Sejm (grand parliament) of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and was the world's only second such document after the US constitution of 1787.

"We should be proud of today's Poland, a free Poland, a Poland that is developing, that is sovereign, a Poland that defends its interests, that does not shy away from



speaking of issues that are important to it also on the international stage, a Poland that today belongs to major international organisations and is active in those organisations", President Duda stressed.

Poland expresses its own opinions, even if they prove unpopular, in such organisations, the president added.

"But this is exactly what sovereignty is, it is the pro-state thinking, and it is our Polish point of view that we are not afraid to present. (...) Because every patriot who honestly represents their country first of all takes care of its interests, placing their country and their compatriots on top", Andrzej Duda said.

"I want a constitutional referendum to be held in Poland in 2018, the centenary of Poland's independence", President Andrzej Duda said during observances at Warsaw's Castle Square on Wednesday to mark the 226th anniversary of the May 3 Constitution of 1791.

The president expressed a hope the referendum could be carried out above divisions.

"Being a president I want to carry out this project with my compatriots. I want the referendum regarding the Polish Constitution to be held in our country next year, the centenary of Poland's independence. I want a serious debate on the subject", President Duda said.

"I believe that referring to the achievements of 226 years from the May 3 Constitution, of nearly 30 years after 1989, and of 20 years of the current constitution, we are able to create a constitution which will match the 100 years of independence and the free Republic of Poland", the president went on.

He stressed that the time had come to start a serious debate, to start a debate on the 20th anniversary of the current Constitution and a year before the centenary of Poland's independence.

Poland regained independence on Nov. 11, 1918 after 123 years of partitions.

In 2018 the Polish people should have a say on the future of the Polish political system", President Andrzej Duda said.

The president explained that the nation should express its opinion about the role of the president, the Sejm (lower house) and Senate, among others.

"I believe that in 2018, in the year of the centenary of Poland's independence, the Polish people should have a say on the future of the Polish political system. They should say what political directions they wanted in the future. What role is to be played by the president, the Senate and the Sejm, what civil rights and freedoms should be emphasised more strongly", President Duda said.

The president stressed that "the Republic of Poland should be a state where all people are equal before the law". "(It should be a country) where there are no unjustified privileges, where there are no better castes of citizens, where all citizens are a unity. This is a task, which I, the Polish president, believe must be fulfilled", he added.

President Duda noted that there were many political divisions in Poland but stressed that this was possible "since Poland is a democratic country". "And in connection with this, there are various opinions. And it is good", he stressed.

*Source: PAP, own information*

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