

<http://en.bbn.gov.pl/en/news/686,President-Chief-of-General-Staff-to-be-039first-soldier039-of-the-Republic.html>
2019-01-24, 01:58
21.12.2018

President: Chief of General Staff to be 'first soldier' of the Republic

From December 23, the first part of reforms of the Armed Forces' command and control structures come into force under which the Chief of the General Staff becomes the 'first soldier' of the Republic of Poland, carrying responsibility for command of the Armed Forces.

The change was announced by President Andrzej Duda who was taking part in a ceremonial roll-call in connection with the reforms coming into effect. President Duda had criticised the previous reform of the Armed Forces' command structure from 2014 on the grounds that responsibility for command was "distributed."

"Command is needed, a commander is needed, right now. Exactly from December 23, the first part of the reforms to the command and control structure come into effect, known conventionally and colloquially as small SKiD (System of Command and Control - PAP). (...) Transference, subordination of the General Command of the Armed Forces, Operational Command of the Armed Forces and Chief of the Inspectorate of Armed Forces Support, under the command of the Chief of the General Staff, is just the first element of reform," the president declared.



Duda underscored that "the chief of the General Staff becomes the 'first soldier' of the Republic in the full meaning of the word and the commander." "It is on the Chief of the General Staff that responsibility rests for command of the Polish Armed Forces," he asserted.

Duda noted that this is the first phase of reforms that will have an effect on all the branches of the Armed Forces including the Territorial Defence Force being under the command of the Chief of the General Staff.

A change to the previous System of Command and Control (SKiD), in force from 2014, was one of the first announcements made by the Ministry of National Defence after the ruling Law and Justice party took power in 2015. The relevant law, prepared by the Defence Ministry and the presidential National Security Bureau (BBN) was passed by the Sejm (lower house) in October and the president signed it in November. The change is known as "small SKiD"; in the longer term there will be a greater reorganisation including the restoration of separate commands for the different branches of the Armed Forces.

Source: PAP

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