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Security official visits Polish contingent in Sicily

Head of National Security Bureau (BBN) Pawel Soloch praised Poland's EU military contingent Sophia, which is based near the city of Catania in Sicily, after his two-day visit to the contingent that helps the EU stem the migration crisis.

Pawel Soloch's visit was organised to facilitate Polish President Andrzej Duda's imminent decision whether to extend the Polish soldiers' mission in Italy.

Asked by PAP about the aim of the visit, P. Soloch said he went there to find out more about the functioning of the Polish contingent and the role Poland plays in providing security in the Mediterranean, but also about the functioning of the EU's Sophia operation.

"Today, Poland is one of the key countries taking part in the operation. We've been participating in it from its establishment in 2015, but from 2018 we've been sending one of the biggest military contingents (among the participating states - PAP), including one of the five search and reconnaissance planes taking part in the mission," Soloch stressed.

Poland's participation in the EU's Sophia operation is an important contribution in fighting the migration crisis, Soloch said.

"It is an expression of solidarity, but also an important argument in debates on the increase of allied presence on Poland's territory in response to threats from the east. The need to look at security from a 360-degree perspective is often raised by President Andrzej Duda," the security official added.

Pawel Soloch said he was briefed on the state of construction of the NATO AGS intelligence system which Poland is helping to build and held a meeting with the mayor of Catania.

In NATO's Sigonella base, the BBN head met the commanders of the Italian and American sections of the base.

The EU Naval Force Mediterranean operation was established in May 2015 to help prevent migrant smuggling and human trafficking in the central part of the Mediterranean Sea.

The Polish contingent is composed of about 120 soldiers and military employees.

Source: PAP, own information







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