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Polish president favours bigger NATO presence in CEE

NATO's presence in Central and Eastern Europe should be increased to ensure the alliance's balanced development, Polish President Andrzej Duda said in Bucharest on Tuesday.

"We share a firm opinion with the president of Romania that NATO's presence in our part of Europe should be increased, that this is something natural. It is a matter of NATO's balanced development", President Duda said at a joint press conference with Romanian President Klaus Iohannis.

The presence of NATO infrastructure for military exercises and NATO units should be greater, Andrzej Duda said, adding that action needed to be taken to make sure that the agreement reached in Newport went deeper.

The Polish president explained that by this he meant deployment of critical NATO infrastructure in Poland, "a deeper rotational presence of troops" and, in future, setting up permanent NATO military bases in Poland and elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe.

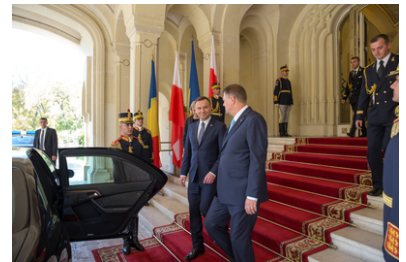
President Duda said this was something he would advocate when speaking with NATO eastern flank leaders in Bucharest on Wednesday and with NATO partners at the 2016 summit in Warsaw.

"For me, a natural consequence of enlarging NATO is supplementing the infrastructure in countries where, so far, it is limited or non-existent", said Poland's head of state, adding that it was also a means of adjusting to the current geopolitical situation.

"Let us remember that NATO is a defence alliance. Ensuring security is a fundamental element in this, a natural activity that NATO should undertake", the Polish president continued.

"We cannot allow the European Union's reliance ... on Russian natural gas to increase", President Duda said about energy security, which he had also discussed with President Iohannis. The Nord Stream 2 pipeline is a political project with no economic justification, in the Polish president's view.

Problems of key importance for the development of the situation in Central and Eastern Europe are those of Moldova, the Black Sea basin and Ukraine, according to Poland's president. "A situation of smouldering conflict, frozen military operations, is not one that can be accepted in the long term. Ukraine must regain control of its borders", he said.



"With the Romanian president, we will not only carefully monitor further developments, but if necessary we are prepared to undertake joint diplomatic activity in this matter", president Duda said.

Pointing out that the two presidents were against a quota system for accepting refugees, Andrzej Duda added that as regards the migration crisis, there was no doubt that humanitarian aid was needed as well as preventive measures - implementation of a peace process, including in Syria.

Economic cooperation with Romania will be more advantageous once new road and rail connections are in place, according to Poland's president. He added that this was a matter of good utilisation of EU funds, good cooperation with neighbours and cooperation of countries between the Baltic, Black and Adriatic seas.

Concerning energy and military security, President Duda presented a proposal to his Romanian counterpart to set up a "presidential coordination committee".

President Iohannis said that he would like to see a stronger strategic partnership with Poland and underlined that both countries could play a major role in strengthening NATO's eastern flank.

Source: president.pl; PAP

Fot: Andrzej Hrechorowicz, KPRP

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