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President discusses Ukraine, Middle East, EU issues in Paris

The Minsk agreements have to be fulfilled, presidents Andrzej Duda of Poland and Francois Hollande of France agreed in Paris on Wednesday.

President Duda underlined that cooperation between Poland and France was good and went back "centuries". He added that he and French President Hollande shared similar views on issues such as the conflict in Ukraine.

"(The French) president's words about the Minsk agreements are very important ... especially that the Minsk agreements have to be implemented in full. This means we cannot have individual items picked from them and then say that they have been implemented", Andrzej Duda explained.

"They will be fulfilled when they are implemented in full. It is important that France, which is one of the authors of this agreement, is taking such a firm stand", the Polish president told reporters.

He also said that Poland was pleased about this "as Ukraine's neighbour, as a country which is really concerned about there not being a frozen conflict in Ukraine - something we all fear - but which wants to see lasting peace there and Ukraine regaining control of its borders".

"Our stand on this is absolutely the same, and I am happy that a president who is part of the Normandy format is presenting such a firm position", President Duda also remarked.

Hollande informed reporters that a meeting of the governments of Poland and France would be held in early 2016. He added that he and German Chancellor Angela Merkel had decided to organise a meeting of the Weimar Triangle (Poland, France, Germany) in the first half of next year, before the July NATO summit in Warsaw.

Duda and Hollande also discussed the conflict in Syria and the influx of refugees into Europe. "We have no doubts that today everything possible needs to be done to end the war (in Syria)", the Polish president said, adding that it was important to provide financial support to refugees in camps to ensure a decent standard of living and to have them as close as possible to their native countries so that they can easily return when the situation changes.

"It gave me satisfaction to talk about the French initiative in the United Nations, in the Security Council, as regards restricting the right of veto in the case of conflicts that entail crimes on a mass scale, especially the crime of genocide", President Duda also told reporters.

"I supported France's initiative very firmly when addressing the UN plenary meeting," he added.

Andrzej Duda informed reporters that he had told President Hollande of Poland's application for the status of a non-permanent member of the Security Council for 2018-2019, and said that "regarding peace initiatives aimed at resolving difficult situations in the world, of the most drastic kind, when people are killed, France can count on (Poland as) an ally".

"It was with great joy that I received the (French) president's signal that in that case (Poland's) candidacy has France's approval. This is extremely important to us; France is a great, not just European but also global power, and a very important player on the international arena", Duda continued.

"We also talked about Britain, the approaching referendum there on staying in the European Union, and what action the British government could take", said the Polish president.

"We hope that the referendum will have a positive outcome for the EU - meaning that Britain will stay", he added.

Another topic that the presidents discussed was the upcoming climate summit in Paris. "My position is that this issue should always be considered taking into account the interests of individual EU countries and our European energy potential in a broad sense", President Duda said.

"We should do our best to use that potential as well as possible, including investing in science, research and new technologies in order to protect the climate also in this way, using the energy resources we have", he continued.

In Andrzej Duda's view, the climate summit in Paris will be a success if an agreement is effected among the world's leading economies. "I have in mind those economies which have not yet introduced serious restrictions on climate matters but are definitely global giants - I mean China, India, Brazil, the United States and Russia", Poland's president explained.

Such a climate agreement "is something we certainly should strive for, it is also a matter of the European economy's security and competitiveness in the coming years and decades", Andrzej Duda underlined.

The two presidents also talked about youth exchanges and better economic relations. "Today France is one of Poland's absolutely biggest (economic) partners, but things can always be better, the climate can always be more favourable", President Duda pointed out.

Source: president.pl; PAP

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