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## President: NATO-Russia dialogue should be based on partnership

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**The NATO-Russia dialogue should be conducted from a position of partnership so that Russia could have the sense of talking with a community ready to defend its territory collectively and in solidarity, President Andrzej Duda said after a meeting with his Slovenian counterpart Borut Pahor in Warsaw on Friday.**

During their talks, the two presidents also agreed on the need to support Macedonia in the fight against illegal immigration. The two officials also discussed bilateral cooperation. Pahor invited Duda to visit Slovenia.

Speaking at a joint press conference with Pahor in Warsaw, Duda said that the two leaders saw eye to eye on NATO's activities with regard to Russia's policies. "We have the same position on NATO's actions," Duda said. "We have no doubt that it is necessary to strengthen the North Atlantic Alliance, or more precisely to strengthen its presence, in both our part of Europe and in the south, where there are also potential threats."

"Neither President Pahor nor I are in favour of isolating Russia," Andrzej Duda added. "We believe that the dialogue with Russia should continue, but it should be conducted from a position of partnership."

According to Duda, such a dialogue based on partnership "should be conducted by the countries and by the community of the North Atlantic Alliance, which is strong, responsible and based on solidarity, so that the Russian side had a sense of talking with a serious partner, not a partner who is weak, undecided, and that this partner is at any time ready to defend its territory collectively and in solidarity should there be any acts of aggression against any NATO country."

According to Duda, this approach entails "the need to make a series of decisions" during NATO's upcoming summit in Warsaw "linked with an increased presence of NATO forces in our part of Europe and in other regions."

"This implies the need to make certain decisions that are undoubtedly political in nature, also when it comes to the dialogue with Russia," Andrzej Duda said.

During their Warsaw meeting, the two presidents also talked about the situation in the Balkans, especially in the context of the migration crisis in Europe. "We talked about the need of constant support for Macedonia, which is significantly ... blocking a new wave of the migration crisis, and that in connection with this it is necessary to smoothly implement the European Union's agreement with Turkey in order to support Greece, which is still in a difficult situation," Andrzej Duda said.

President Duda said that he assured Pahor during the meeting that Poland would provide assistance to anyone who expects such assistance from it, "which means anyone who applies for asylum in Poland ... especially if they are a refugee and running away from a war in their country."

Andrzej Duda added that Poland was opposed to "the mechanism for the forced relocation of refugees" recently proposed by the European Commission. "Our position has always been clear: that anyone who is in need and

comes to Poland ... will be provided with assistance," he said.

Pahor said he understood the position of Poland and other countries in region with regard to Russia. "Slovenia understands that countries, especially those that had bitter and unpleasant experiences with the Russian Federation in the previous century, are sensitive to Moscow's actions, and we understand your concerns related to such a policy. We understand the positions of Poland, the Baltic states and other countries that expect greater preparedness and defence capability from the Alliance if needed," he said.

He also said that Slovenia saw itself as a Central European country and was interested in cooperating with the Visegrad Group, which is a regional alliance of Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary.

*Source: president.pl; PAP*

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