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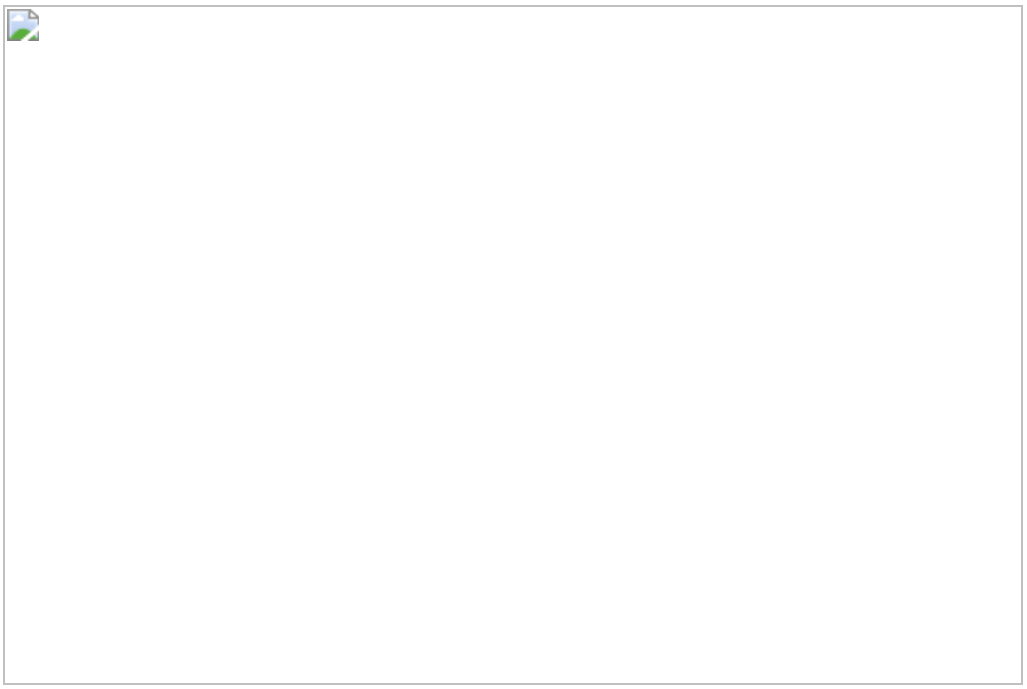
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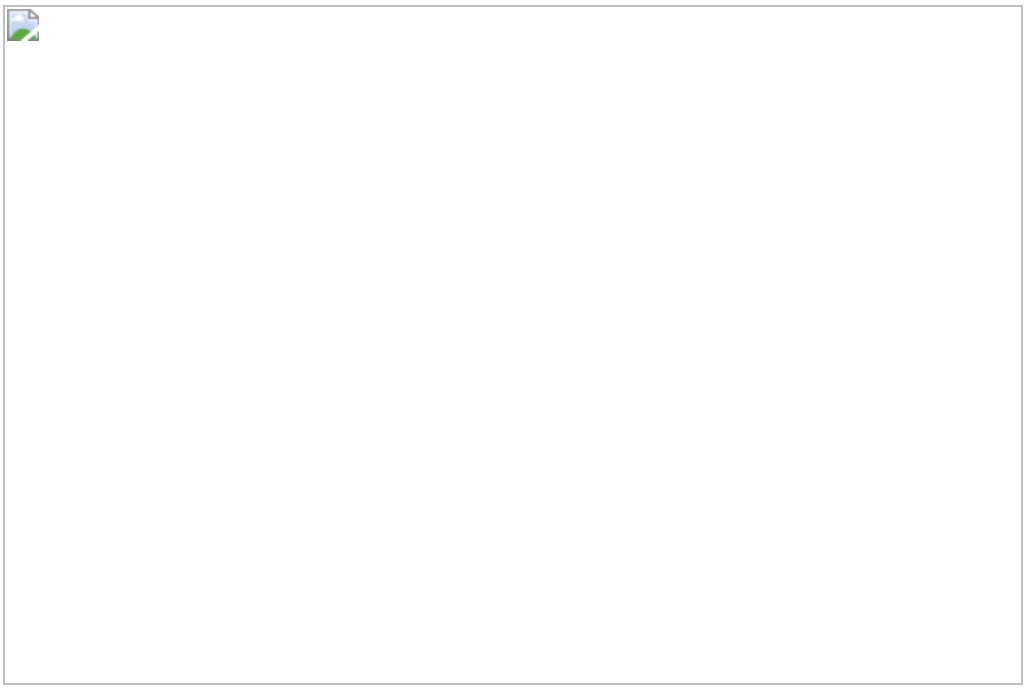
Poland's independence centenary

Poland's independence centenary is being celebrated throughout all of Poland and worldwide on Sunday, November 11, exactly 100 years after the country regained freedom. Poland regained independence on November 11, 1918, after 123 years of partitions.

President Duda lays wreaths at Poland's independence fathers memorials

President Andrzej Duda on Poland's Independence Day on Sunday laid wreaths at monuments honouring Poland's independence fathers: Marshal Józef Piłsudski, Wincenty Witos, Roman Dmowski and Ignacy Jan Paderewski.

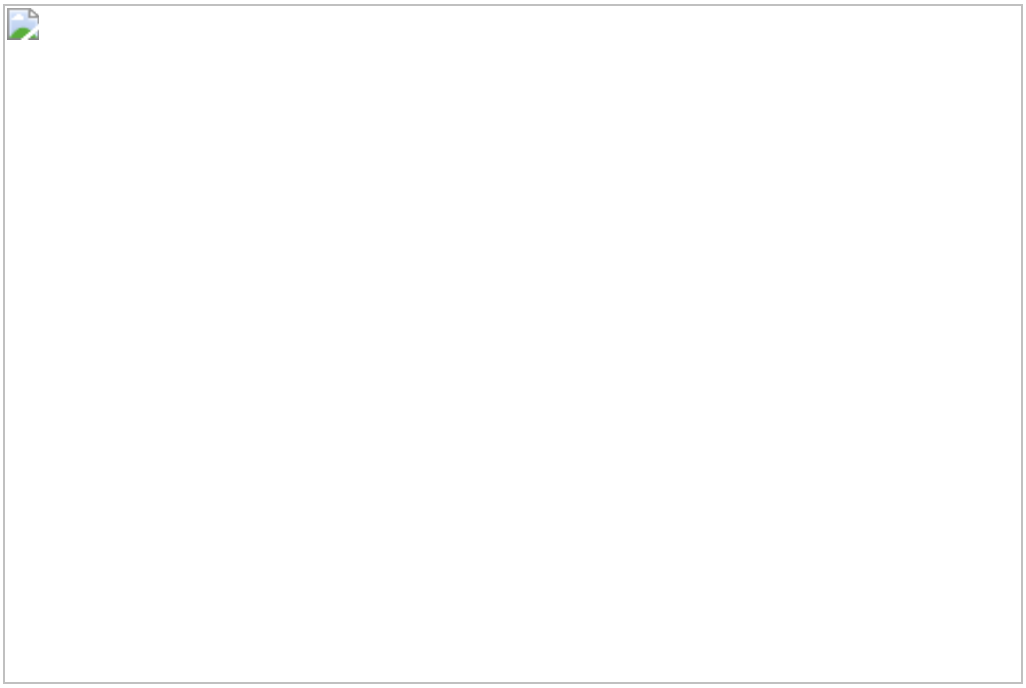


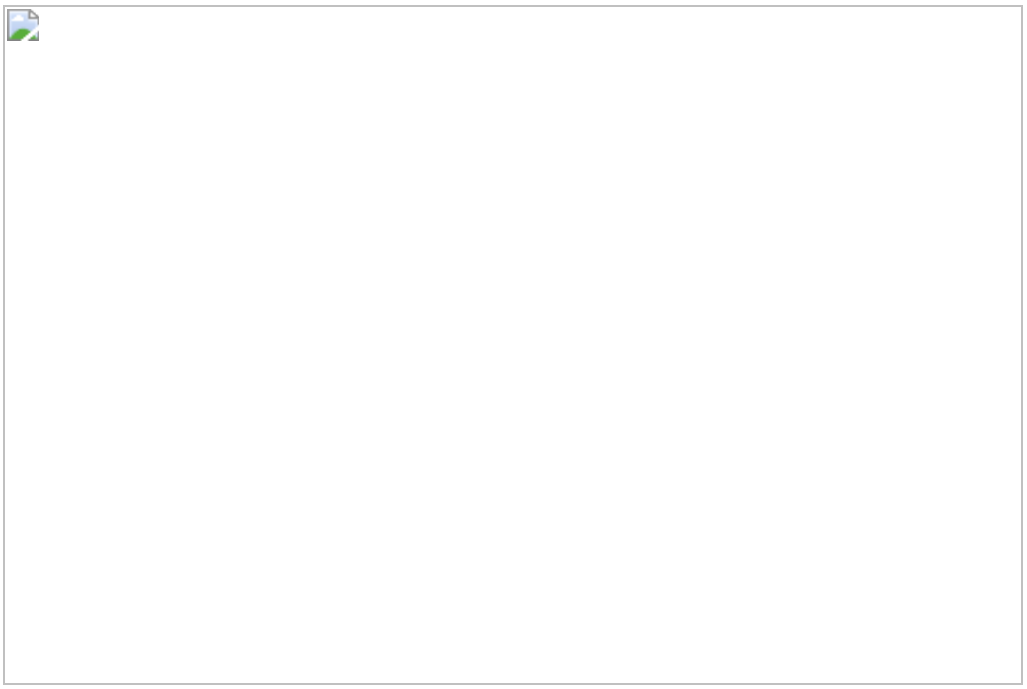


A gala changing of the guard and a memorial roll-call

Addressing the gathering at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in the Piłsudskiego Square in Warsaw on Poland's Independence Day, President Andrzej Duda stressed that it is a true joy that 100 years ago there were people who could be united despite differences of opinion.

The president's address was preceded by a gala changing of the guard and a memorial roll-call. The Poles gathered in the Piłsudskiego Square honoured Poland's independence centenary by singing the Polish national anthem, which was also sung in over 600 places in Poland and worldwide.

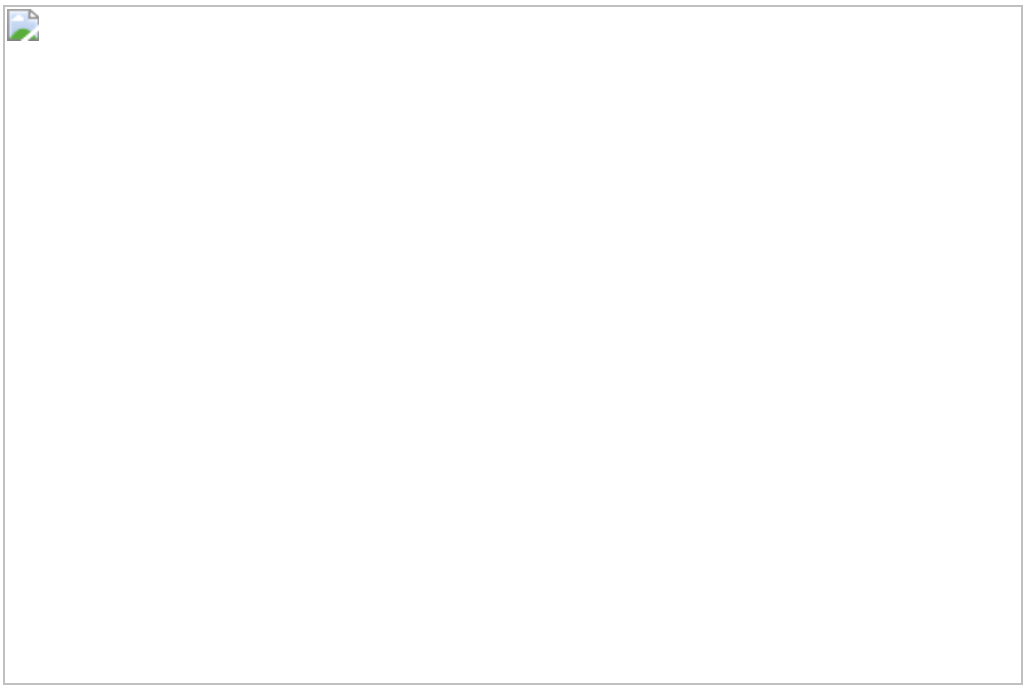


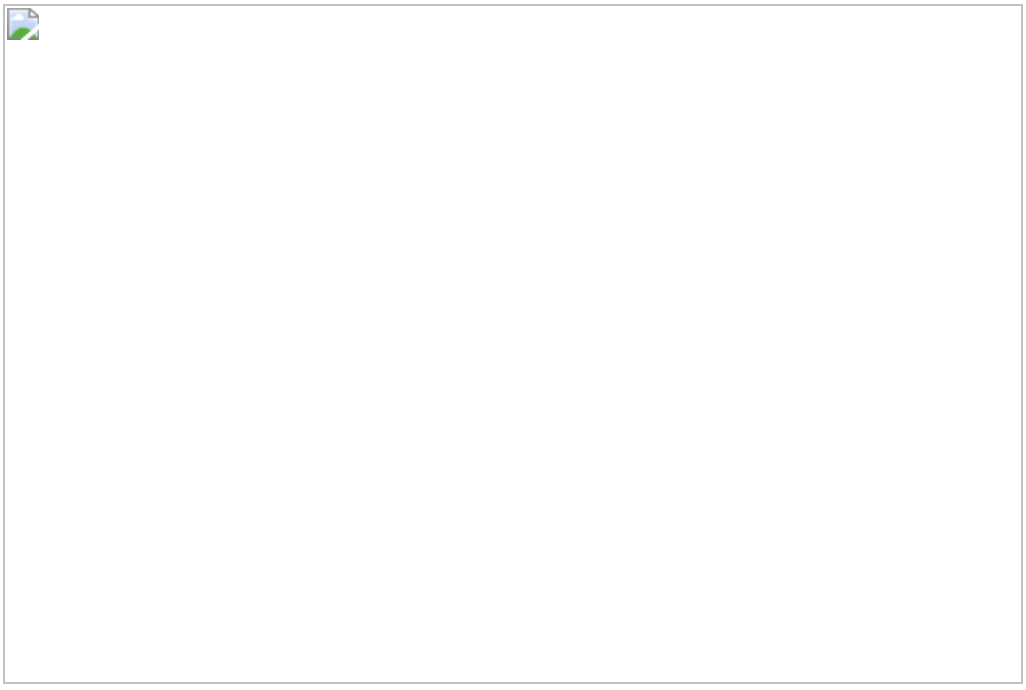


"It is a great joy that 100 years ago there were such people, such soldiers and such leaders, the Independence Fathers, who could be united in order to regain Poland as, despite differences of opinion, they had only this one idea in mind," President Duda said.

"God was protecting us and we were also fortunate (...) to have such soldiers, such people and such leaders - who were not only extremely brave, intelligent, skillful, like the Independence Fathers: Marshal Józef Piłsudski, Ignacy Jan Paderewski, Roman Dmowski, Wincenty Witos and others - but who could be together, who could be united to reach this most important goal, namely, to regain Poland, so that it simply could exist, despite the differences of views and despite the difference of ideas they were serving," the President stressed.

"A free, independent and sovereign Poland was the single idea uniting them," accented President Duda.





President Duda thanked everyone for taking part in the Sunday celebrations of the hundredth anniversary of Poland regaining its independence to pay homage to "those to whom we owe free, independent, sovereign Poland."

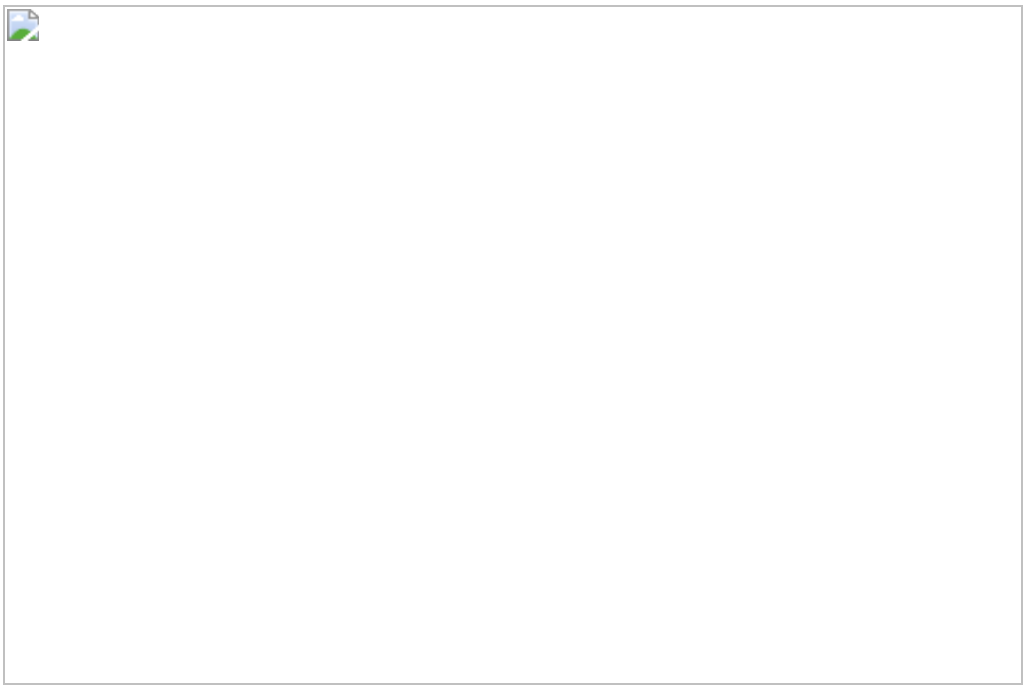
"Thank you for this beautiful ceremony, thank you that you have listened to our appeal and have come with white and red banners (...) and that in such an amazing way we can pay tribute to those to whom we owe free, independent, sovereign Poland," Andrzej Duda stressed.

"To those who regained (Poland - PAP) in 1918," the President continued, "to those who then fought to maintain its borders,

defended it in 1939, fought in the underground to regain it and then refused to accept the communist, soviet yoke and continued to fight and die. To those who went out on the streets to demand decent living conditions, work, pay and finally freedom," the President concluded.

"I wish we could always be together," President Duda went on to say and added that "I am convinced that under the white and red banner there is a place for each of us, regardless of our views."

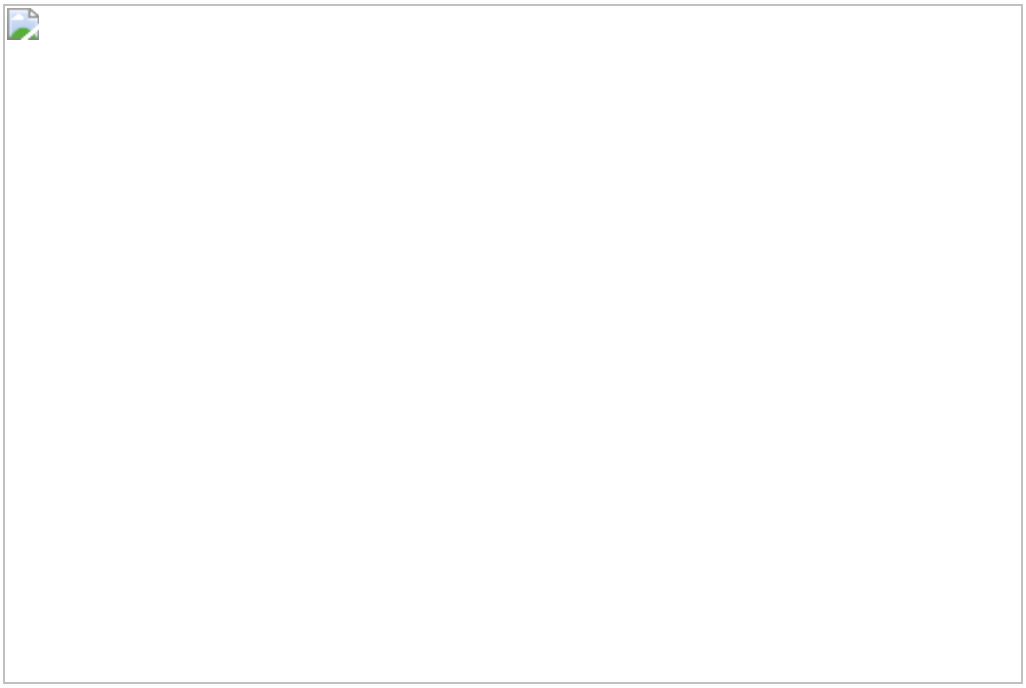
The President also said that disagreements never serve in the building of a strong state. "Disagreements interfere with this, which the Second Polish Republic (interwar Poland) also learned and, unfortunately, in less than 21 years was defeated by Soviet and Nazi invaders, by Russians and Germans," Andrzej Duda said, stressing "how hard it was afterwards to return to a free Poland, how hard it was to regain this independence."

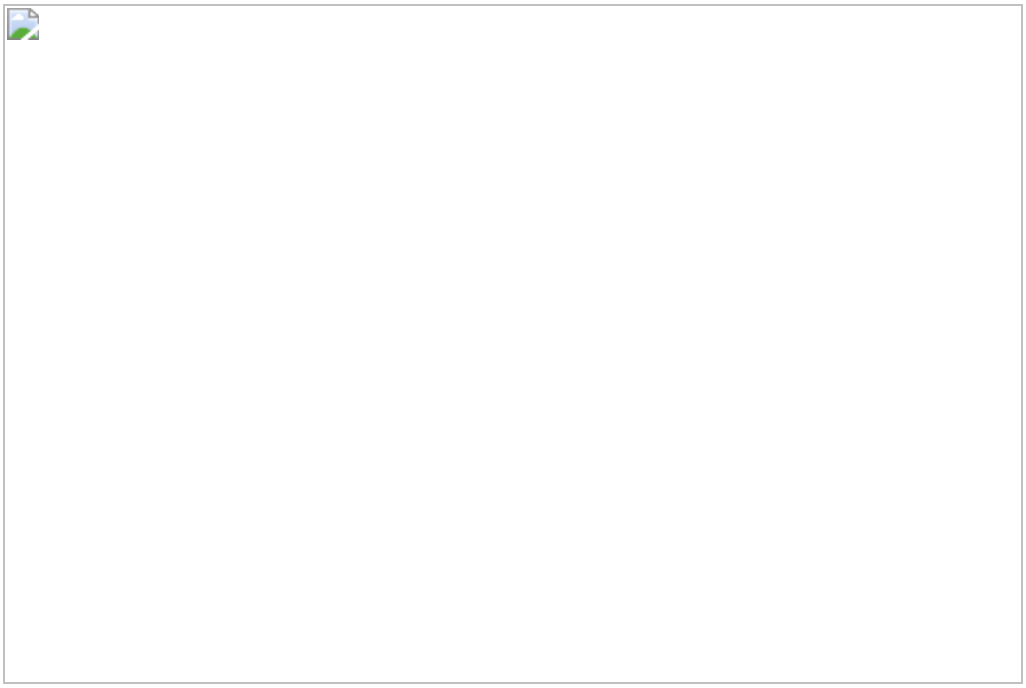


President Duda thanked the gathered for their presence "under white and red banners". "It is a great celebration of a free, independent and sovereign Poland. I wish we could always be together," President Andrzej Duda said during Sunday's event which celebrated the centenary of Poland regaining independence. "I am convinced that under the white and red banner there is room for each of us, regardless of our views, because, I deeply believe, there is love for the homeland in each of us," he said.

The Polish President appealed to Poles to be, on Independence Day, focused on the colours of the Polish flag, the national anthem and "the beautiful idea of a sovereign and independent Poland."
"But above all, let us be Poland "with a strong and united society, with responsible politicians who try every day to make Poland stronger, better governed, to allow citizens live a better life and believe that they live in a fair state where honesty prevails over cynicism and meanness, and where authority serves this aim," Andrzej Duda underlined.

"These are my best wishes to Poland and to us all," concluded the President.





Referring to the rebuilding of the Saski Palace, the head of state said that it should be a symbol of the rebuilding of Poland 100 years ago.

"I want the rebuilding of the Saski Palace, which is being inaugurated today, to be a symbol taken from the rebuilding of Poland 100 years ago and to be a visible symbol of Poland, which has been developing," he underlined.

"I want us to refer, during the next 100 years, to this great process carried out in the Second Republic of Poland, which was rebuilt

from ruins. And there was a state built, that was developing in a more and more efficient way. It was a state with a new harbour in Gdynia, a state with a Central Industrial District, and a state which had a huge chance to develop dynamically and become one of the European powers," he went on to say.

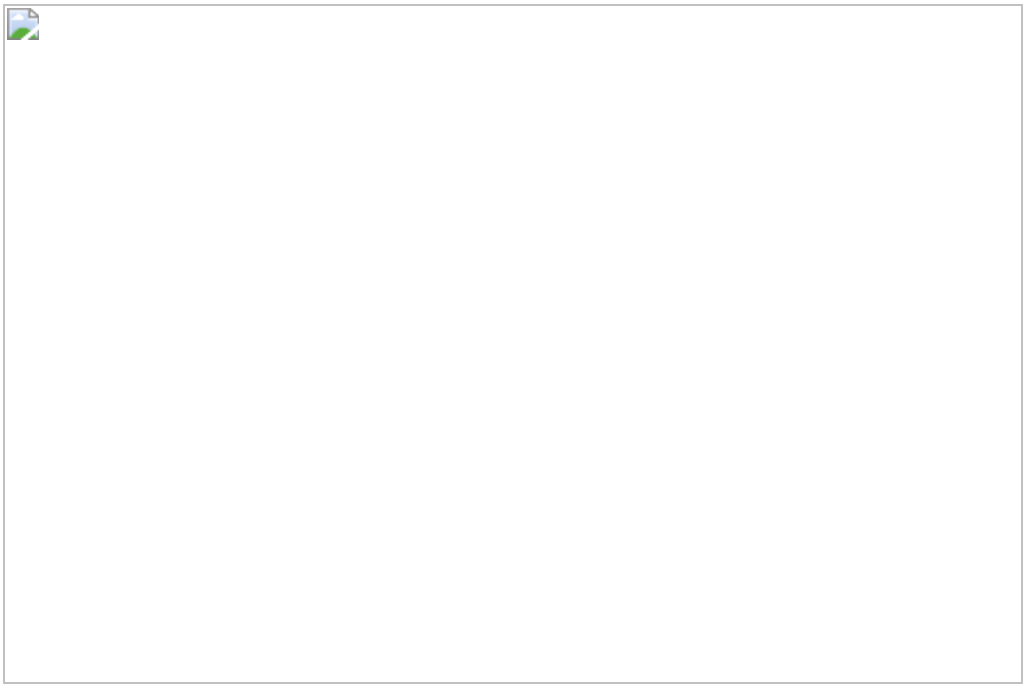
"(...) I want the rebuilt Saski Palace to be a building open to the public," he added.

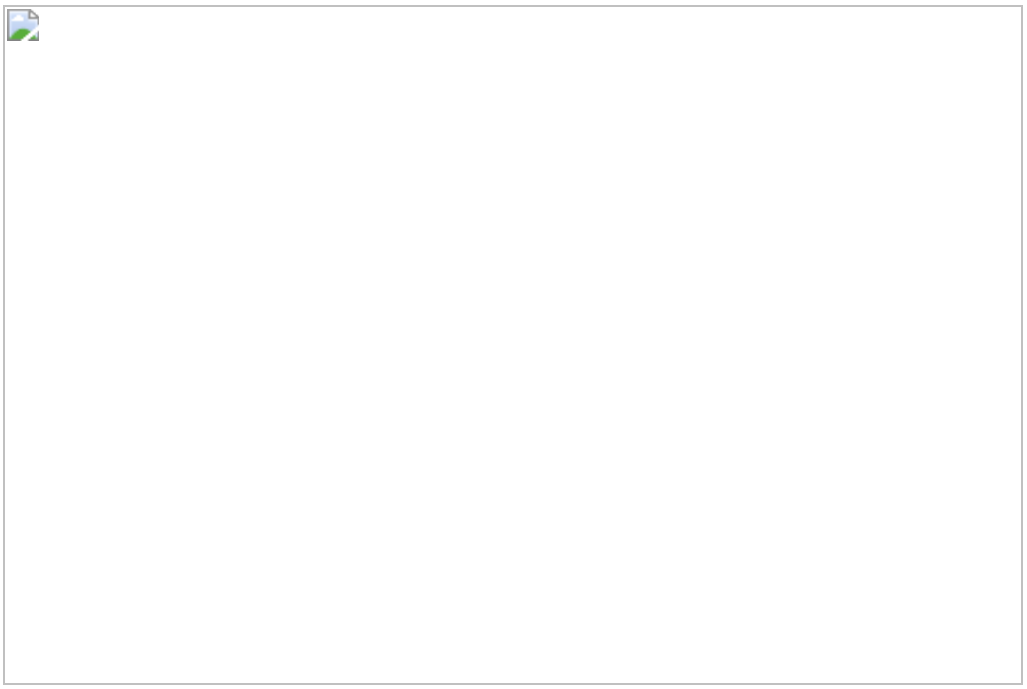
The President also wished his Homeland to have a nation which is a community of people who are faithful and wise, who support each other and who are building a community.
Long live a free, independent and sovereign Poland," President Duda concluded.

President confers posthumously Order of the White Eagle upon 25 Poles

On Poland's Independence Day on Sunday, President Andrzej Duda conferred posthumously the Order of the White Eagle, the highest Polish distinction, upon 25 Poles "merited for the glory, prosperity and benefit of Poland."
The ceremony was held at the Royal Castle in Warsaw.

"Each of these persons is surely an outstanding personality, and each of them is also a symbolic person," the President said.

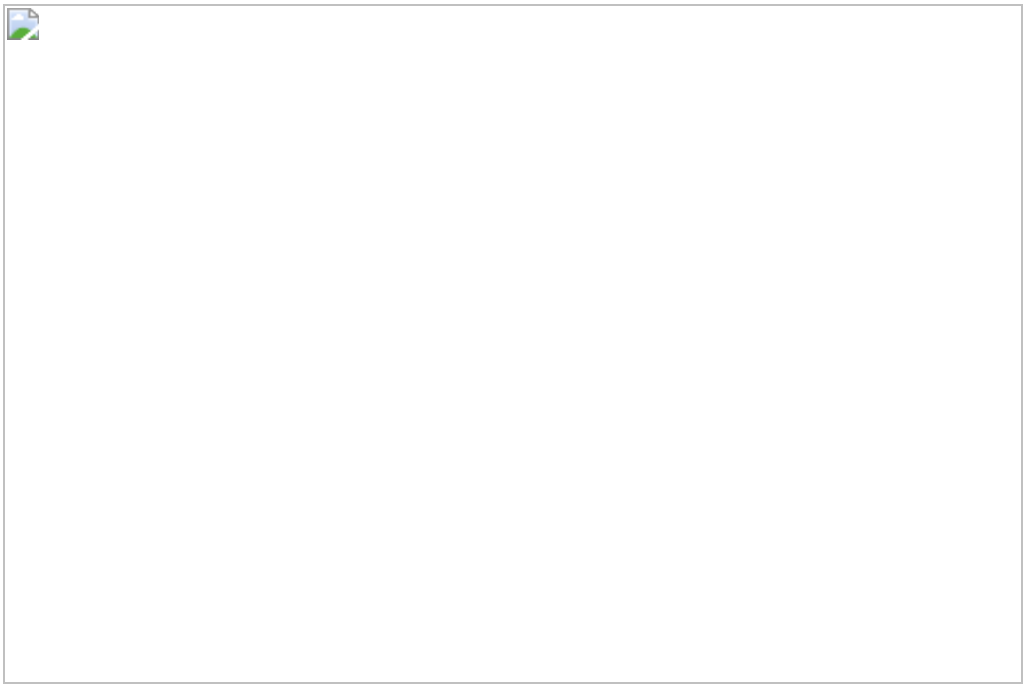


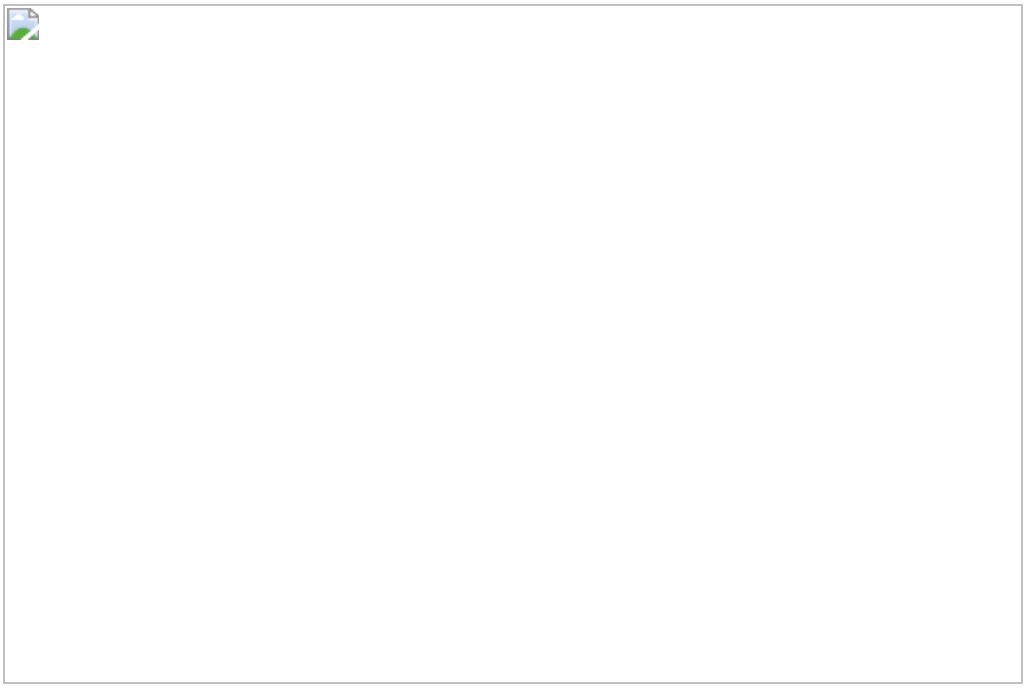


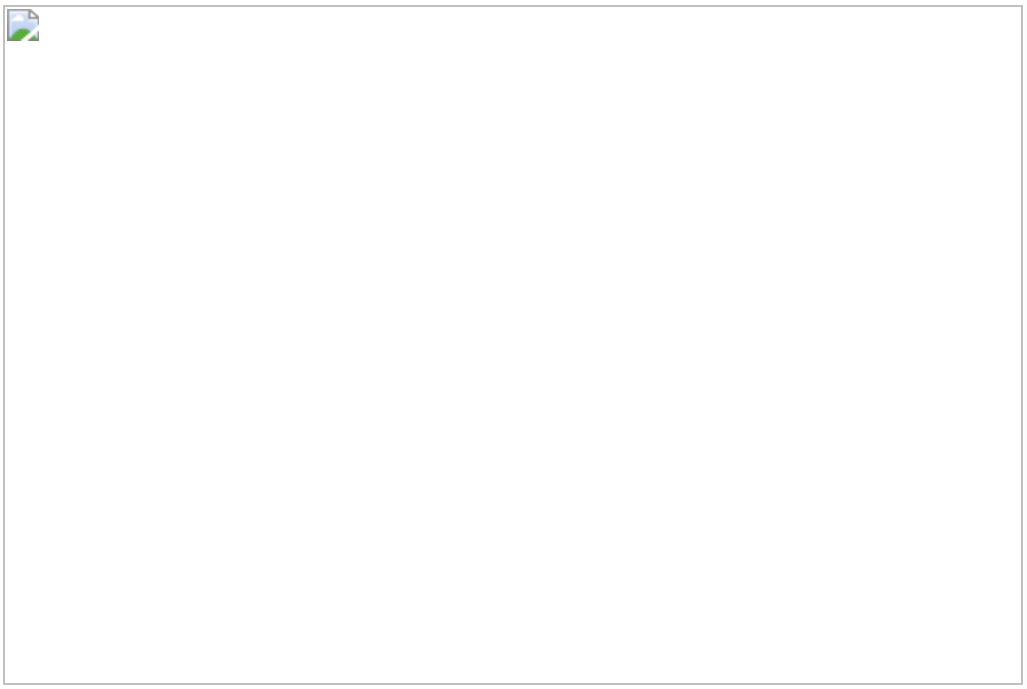
The order was conferred upon Maria Skłodowska-Curie, an outstanding Polish scientist and a two-time Nobel Prize winner, Stanisław Banach, one of the most outstanding mathematicians of the 20th century, Hilary Koprowski, a physician and inventor of a vaccination against the poliovirus which causes poliomyelitis or infantile paralysis, and Ignacy Daszyński, a Polish pre-war politician and prime minister.

The distinction was also granted to Roman Dmowski, a politician and a diplomat, one of the leaders of Poland's independence movement, Stanisław Mierzwa, a peasant-movement activist, Maciej Rataj, a politician, an independence activist and Sejm (lower house) speaker, Halina Konopacka, Poland's first woman athlete to win an Olympic medal, and Stanisław Sosabowski, an independence activist and general of the Polish Armed Forces in the West during WWII.

The order was also conferred upon archbishop Antoni Baraniak, the secretary of Poland's Primates August Hlond and Stefan Wyszyński, bishop Juliusz Bursche of the Evangelical-Augsburg Church, Father Szymon Fedorowicz, the chief Orthodox chaplain of the Polish Army, and Baruch Steinberg, the chief rabbi of the Polish Army - the latter two were murdered by NKVD Soviet security forces in the 1940 Katyń Forest Massacre, in which some 22,000 Polish officers and members of the intelligentsia were murdered.







The President conferred the distinction upon Janusz Korczak (Henryk Goldszmit), a writer and a social activist, Holocaust victim, Leon Kryczyński (Mirza Najman), an outstanding representative of the Tartar minority in Poland, Wojciech Kossak, one of the most popular Polish painters, Zofia Kossak-Szczucka, a writer and one of the organisers of aid to Jews during WWII, Olga Drahonowska-Małkowska and Andrzej Małkowski, Polish scouting movement activists, Jędrzej Moraczewski, an independence activist and Polish PM in pre-war Poland, and Leon Petrażycki, an outstanding lawyer and a politician.

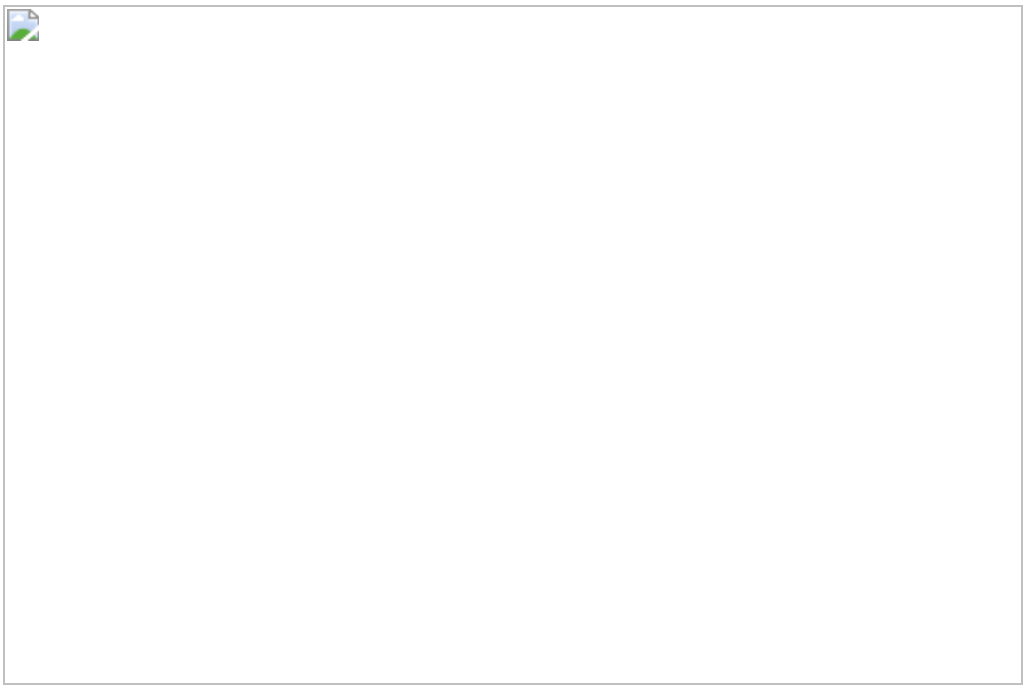
The order was also conferred upon writers Kornel Makuszyński, Władysław Stanisław Reymont (a Nobel Prize winner) and Stefan Żeromski, and composer Karol Szymanowski.

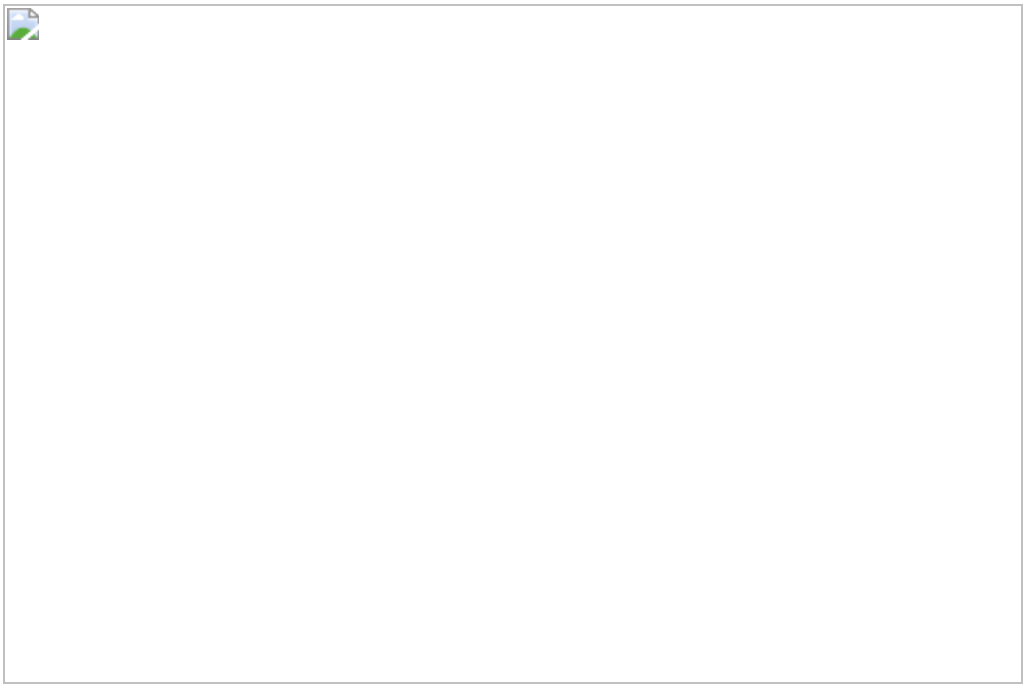
The Order of the White Eagle is Poland's highest distinction, established in 1705, and given for outstanding civilian and military merit to the country. It has been bestowed on the most outstanding Polish people and foreigners.

White and Red March marking the 100th independence anniversary 'For You Poland'

There is a place for everyone under the white and red colours; it is our flag, never white and never again red, Polish President Andrzej Duda said in his address at the start of Warsaw's White and Red March marking the 100th independence anniversary.

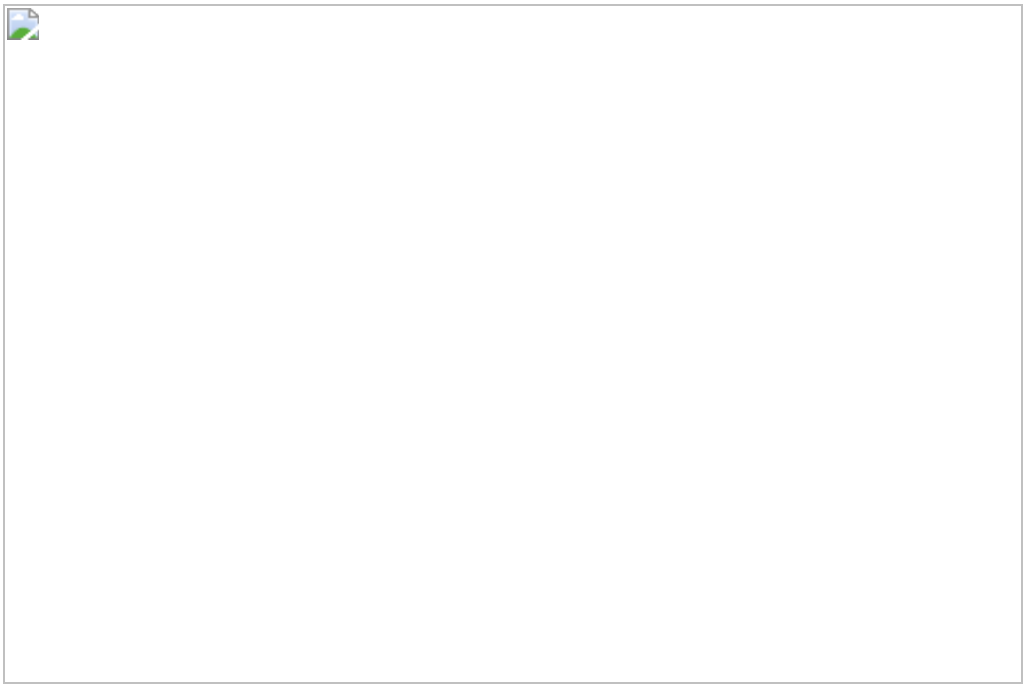
Held under the motto 'For You Poland,' the march was organised by state authorities under the president's auspices. Nationalist groups organised a separate march under the slogan 'God, Honour, Fatherland,' which trailed the official one.

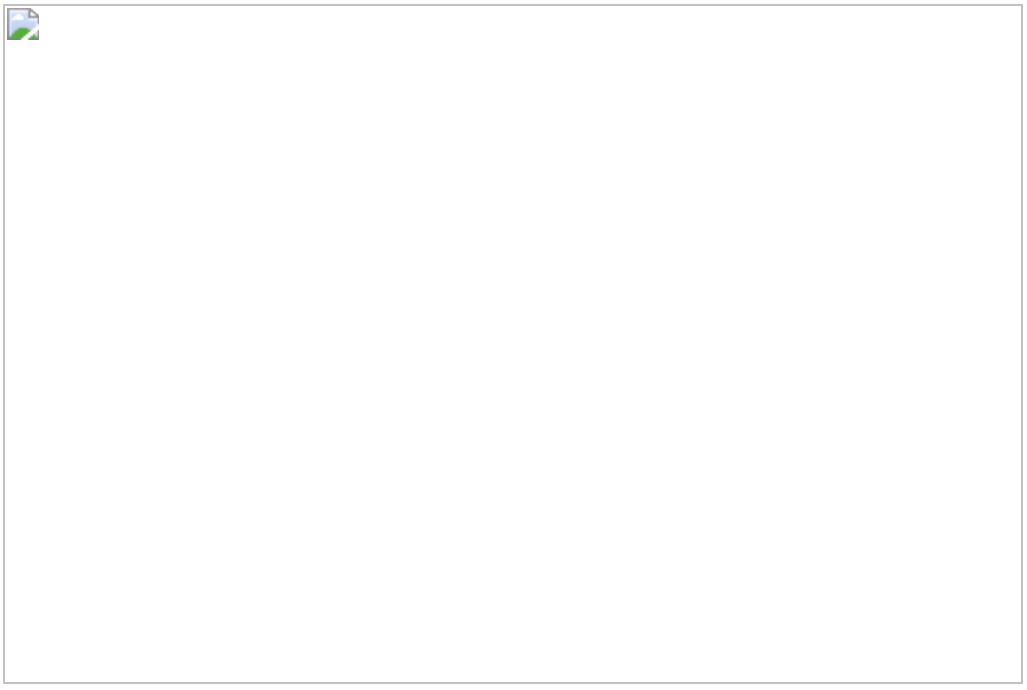


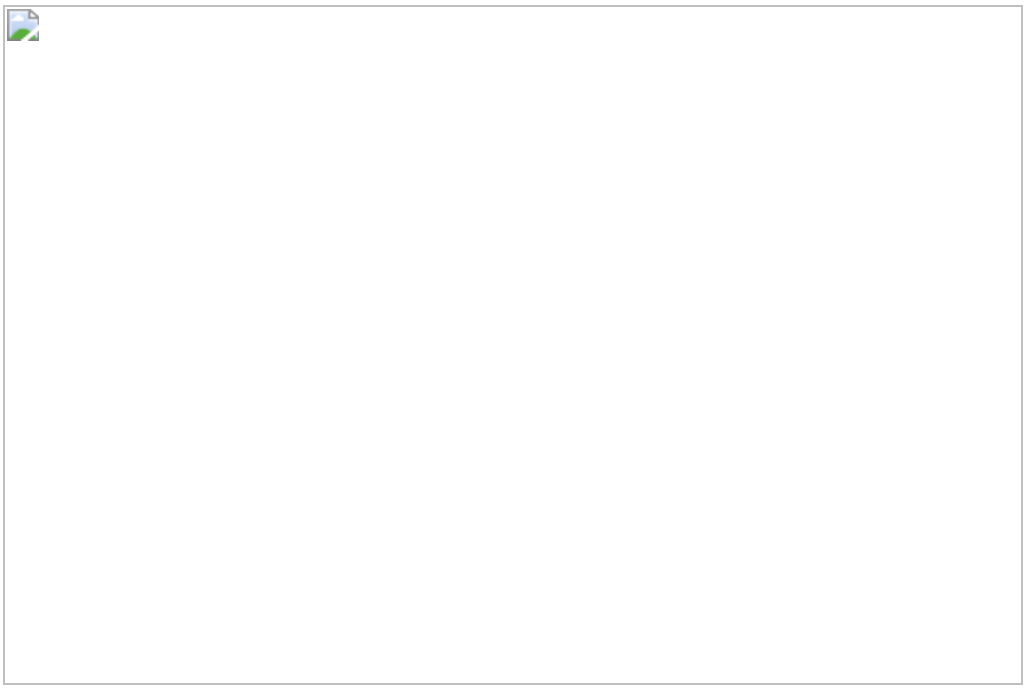


President Duda thanked everyone who came to the event "from every corner of Poland."

"I want us to march under our white and red flags together in an atmosphere of joy, in an atmosphere of tribute to our heroes and our country. To honour those who fought for Poland, who regained it for us, and to rejoice because we have it free, sovereign and independent," Andrzej Duda said.







Representatives of the Polish Armed Forces led the White and Red March, with soldiers representing all formations carrying a symbolic 100 Polish national flags.

Source: president.pl

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