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## Polish-Cyprus relations vital in view of participation in UN missions

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**Relations with Cyprus are important in view of the country's geographical location and Poland's planned return to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) mission, head of the National Security Bureau (BBN) Paweł Soloch has told PAP.**

According to Soloch his recent visit to Cyprus "was aimed at strengthening relations with countries important to the region of Southern Europe and the Middle East."

Paweł Soloch emphasized that "Cyprus is the southernmost country in the European Union. For Europe it is a gateway to the Middle East and a country that plays a significant role in the migration crisis." "We are interested in strengthening our cooperation within the European Union, including Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), as well as in developing NATO-EU cooperation," the BBN head added.

"Due to its location, several dozen kilometres from the coast of Lebanon, relations with Cyprus take on special significance in view of Poland's planned participation in the UNIFIL peace mission in Lebanon," said P. Soloch, adding that during his visit he discussed the security situation in the region and the experiences of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP).

Minister P. Soloch underscored that participation in UNIFIL will be the return of Poland to peacekeeping operations. "This is one of the priorities of President Andrzej Duda's security policy, complementing Polish membership in the UN Security Council and strengthening the position in the Middle East," which, according to Paweł Soloch is "one of the areas of key importance for global security."

"Poland, as part of building its international position, must be present there. Today, we have Polish military contingents in Iraq and Jordan. In the coming weeks, we can expect official decisions by the government and the president regarding a 200-strong contingent in Lebanon," added the head of the National Security Bureau.

During his September 9-11 visit to Nicosia, Paweł Soloch met the president of Cyprus and the defence and foreign ministers.

The 200-strong Polish contingent is to join the UNIFIL in November. Poland joined the mission in 1992. Ten years ago it withdrew from UN peacekeeping missions in Lebanon, Syria and Chad, to focus on NATO and EU missions.

Source: PAP

