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## There is one Poland, president says on Independence Day

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**Historians say that today's Poland is the most independent, wealthiest and safest Poland since the 17th century, President Andrzej Duda said in his speech at Pilsudskiego Square in Warsaw on Monday, as the country marked its Independence Day.**

The main ceremonies took place in Warsaw's central square that bears the name of Marshal Jozef Pilsudski, the mastermind of Poland's 1918-regained independence. The ceremonies started with the singing of the national anthem. It was sung simultaneously in several hundred locations throughout Poland and abroad. Apart from the president, the observances were also attended by PM Mateusz Morawiecki, Sejm and Senate Speakers Elżbieta Witek and Stanisław Karczewski, respectively, government, army and church officials as well as Poles from all over Poland.



Addressing the gathering, President Duda said that entire generations of Poles did not have the luck we have today, "especially those young people born after 1989 because they do not remember the times when Poland was not fully independent and not fully free."



The president stressed that he was very glad that better understanding our difficult history, "we have been growing more mature as both the state and the Polish nation."

Recalling November 11, 1918, when Poland returned to the map of the world, President Duda emphasised that much blood had to be shed after that date in order to make it possible for Poland to stabilise and have strong borders. In this context he mentioned the Wielkopolskie Uprising, the 1st Silesian Uprising as well as the war against the Soviets with the victorious 1920 Battle of Warsaw, in which the Polish army halted the westward-advancing Red Army on the outskirts of the Polish capital.

President Duda stressed that "we are the Polish people since we have come from this land, irrespective of our nationality."



"We are the Polish people when there is Poland and Polish tradition living in us," the president said, adding that all Poles have responsibilities towards Poland, "from the left to the right."

President Duda underlined that current and future generations should learn a lesson from the fact that Poland develops fastest and is strongest when its citizens realise they have to run Polish matters together.

The head of state also emphasised that the number of Polish people going to the polls during parliamentary and European elections should be going up because "Poland needs this." "High election turnout means that we ever better understand modern democracy and implement it."

"There is one Poland, and there will be one Poland, with all of us serving it. And I deeply believe that we will continue serving it, just like the next generation will do," he said.

President Duda lauded Poland's successes of the last three decades, with special emphasis on the economic situation as well as Poland's membership of the EU and NATO.

"We are a state and a nation, which are respected not only in Poland; our representatives are respected outside its borders," he said, expressing his thanks to his compatriots in Poland and abroad. "This is your achievement. Poland would not look like it does today if it were not for your hard work and effort," he concluded.

Earlier on Monday, President Duda laid flowers at monuments of the six Fathers of Polish Independence and attended, together with his wife, a mass for the homeland, celebrated at the Temple of Divine Providence in Warsaw. He also awarded the Order of the White Eagle, Poland's highest distinction, to Professor Andrzej Nowak, a historian, and Professor Grazyna Swiatecka, a cardiologist, and presented state distinctions to several dozen other people. Nowak is the author of the monumental work *The History of Poland*. Swiatecka was the creator of *Anonimowy Przyjaciół* (Anonymous Friend), a helpline for people experiencing problems.

Poland regained independence on November 11, 1918, after 123 years of partitions.

*Source: PAP*

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