

The New Head of State of Poland, Andrzej Duda, who assumed office at the beginning of August, will arrive in Estonia for a work visit on 23 August at the invitation of President Toomas Hendrik Ilves.

"The fact that this is the first foreign visit of President Duda and Estonia was chosen as the destination serves to prove, once again, the closely intertwined allied relationships between Poland and Estonia," said President Ilves. "Poland has a central role in standing for our regional security interests and strengthening the unity of NATO; we can also all see the influence of Poland in defending the common interests of the European Union."

The Estonian Head of State described as symbolic the fact that the visit by President Duda takes place on 23 August, the anniversary of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact concluded by Stalin and Hitler back in 1939, which divided Europe into spheres of influence. Shortly thereafter, Poland was attacked by both Nazi Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union, and it was the first country to lose its independence as the consequence of the Pact; with the occupation by the Soviet Union, the Baltic states were the next to fall.

"This represents a reason for looking into the future and explains why both of us, Estonia and Poland, see as highly important the integration of a democratic and peaceful Europe, without any "spheres of influence" and secret protocols that strengthen parts of Europe," said President Ilves. "This is Europe where – quoting Václav Havel - there is no place for grovelling caution, but we have a love for freedom and justice, respect for human dignity and the ability to prove the authenticity of these feelings by taking action, where appropriate."

In the congratulatory note and invitation sent to Andrzej Duda on his success in the elections at the end of May, the Estonian Head of State wrote: "In anxious times we have the priority of standing steadily for common values and interests and consolidate our co-operation, which is already solid, even more. Close relations between Estonia and Poland have been one of the foreign policy goals of mine for my last eight and a half years as President," he added.

The President of Poland, Andrzej Duda, will meet with the Estonian Head of State in Tallinn; the Speaker of the Parliament, Eiki Nestor, and Prime Minister, Taavi Rõivas, and he will pay a visit to the Occupation Museum where the joint press conference of the presidents of Estonia and Poland will take place.

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