

"While saying farewell to Estonia's ally and my close friend Lech Kaczyński, I wish to express my heartfelt condolences to the people of Poland as well as to the families and friends of the victims of the tragedy." „I have no words to describe my sorrow at receiving news of the tragic plane crash this morning near Smolensk in Russia, carrying president Lech Kaczyński, his wife Maria and a large high-ranking official delegation.

These events are a grave loss to the Republic of Poland and to the Polish people. I bow my head in remembrance of all those who died alongside their President.

News of the tragic loss of the Polish Head of State and one of Estonia's closest friends brings emptiness to my heart and at the same time brings back fond memories of our friendship. I recall our phone calls in April 2007, when president Kaczyński supported Estonia during those difficult days, or August 2008 when we flew together to Tbilisi to support the democratically elected government of Georgia and to condemn the aggression towards that country.

President Kaczyński, who today was on his way to pay homage to his countrymen executed in Katyn by the Soviet Union, was an uncompromising man of virtue who on so many occasions helped Poland's allies and joined them in overcoming common challenges.

Relations between Estonia and Poland expanded remarkably during Lech Kaczyński's tenure. As a man who knew well history, he understood the past well, yet also grasped the imperative of focusing on the present and future. He was a true European and a keen supporter of a better and more secure tomorrow for us all.

Our meetings and discussions – be they in Warsaw, Tallinn or at my home in Ärna - were always sincere, open-hearted and intellectually challenging. Our next meeting was scheduled to take place in Poland on May 20th. Fate has decided otherwise.

While saying farewell to Estonia's ally and my close friend Lech Kaczyński, I wish to express my heartfelt condolences to the people of Poland as well as to the families and friends of the victims of the tragedy. I also convey to you the deepest condolences of the Estonian Parliament, the Estonian Government, the Estonian Defence Forces and of all Estonian friends of Poland.

Our thoughts are with the people of Poland at this time of sorrow.“