

STATEMENTS AND REMARKS

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Remarks by President Donald Tusk on EU-NATO cooperation

We have just signed a joint EU-NATO declaration, which brings the cooperation between the European Union and NATO to the next level. The aim is clear. We want to protect European citizens with all possible means available, and there is no better partner than NATO. That is why we have agreed today to strengthen EU-NATO ties in crucially important areas. They include improving the military mobility of troops and equipment, common preparedness for cyber and hybrid attacks, fighting terrorism and stopping migrant smugglers in the Mediterranean. The fullest possible involvement in our activities of EU Member States that are not NATO members will be encouraged and facilitated in an all-inclusive, non-discriminatory manner, without any artificial obstacles.

Speaking on the eve of the NATO summit here in Brussels, I would like to address President Trump directly, who for a long time now has been criticising Europe almost daily for, in his view, insufficient contributions to the common defence capabilities, and for living off the US. Dear President Trump: America does not have, and will not have a better ally than Europe. Today Europeans spend on defence many times more than Russia, and as much as China. And I think you can have no doubt, Mr President, that this is an investment in common American and European defence and security. Which can't be said with confidence about Russian or Chinese spending.

I would therefore have two remarks here. First of all, dear America, appreciate your allies, after all you don't have that many. And, dear Europe, spend more on your defence, because everyone respects an ally that is well-prepared and equipped.

Money is important, but genuine solidarity is even more important. Speaking about solidarity, I want to dispel the American President's argument, which says that the US alone protects Europe against our enemies, and that the US is almost alone in this struggle. Europe was first to respond on a large scale when the US was attacked, and called for solidarity after 9/11. European soldiers have been fighting shoulder-to-shoulder with American soldiers in Afghanistan. 870 brave European men and women sacrificed their lives, including 40 soldiers from my homeland Poland. Dear Mr President, please remember about this tomorrow, when we meet at the NATO summit, but above all when you meet president Putin in Helsinki. It is always worth knowing: who is your strategic friend? And who is your strategic problem?

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