

Mr President,

Madam Speaker,

Prime Ministers,

Members of the House,

Your Excellencies, Honourable Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honour to address the House today with information from this government on the principles and objectives of Poland's foreign policy.

Recently, our public life was distorted in many aspects, including – to my regret, the regularity of foreign policy debates in this House: first by the COVID-19 pandemic, then by last year's prelude to war across our eastern border that was filled with active diplomatic pursuits by Poland's highest authorities, and finally, from Russia's resumed aggression against Ukraine, which coincided with the Polish Chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

Unprovoked and unjustified armed aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine confronted Poland's foreign policy with fundamental questions we have been addressing systematically every day. Today, the time has come to present in greater detail the principles, tasks, and objectives of that policy, and to submit them for parliamentary debate.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Members of the House,

We are now experiencing a watershed moment in European history. Russian aggression and the defensive war waged by Ukraine amount to a struggle for the future of Europe, over the standards and values that will become pivotal for political life on the continent, for transatlantic relations, and for the institutional aspect of a new European political and security architecture as well as in international politics at large. Russian aggression causes us to reflect on matters that are fundamental for every participant

in the international system. For Poland – the only member of NATO and the European Union that borders Ukraine, Russia, and Belarus – this reflection is existential in character.

The historic breakthrough we are witnessing at this time requires us to reflect beyond it in order to answer the following questions: What kind of world do we want for Poland? What sort of international order suits Poland best?

Members of the House,

The fundamental imperative of Polish politics is the Republic's persistence to continue developing freely. It is the sine qua non for achieving the welfare of all Poles in the country and abroad. The Republic of Poland is the common good of those who maintain identity bonds with it and cultivate its culture and tradition. The tradition of these bonds with the idea of free and independent Poland is particularly important for Polish identity. It was often preserved in the past by Poles scattered across the globe, forming a solid base for the rebuilding of Poland's independent statehood. The persistence and continuance of the Republic of Poland is our shared commitment with regard to the past and future generations of Poles all over the world.

This imperative should also guide our foreign policy, indicating three major principles that stem from our historic experience, political tradition, and political system.

The first principle is to ensure peace and security. Every nation has an inalienable right to peace. To achieve and maintain this goal, we are ready to cooperate with any entity recognised under international law that pursues its policies with respect to equal rights and the self-determination of others.

We Poles know perfectly well the value of peace. Over the last three decades, Poland has taken advantage of the historic opportunities offered by peace in Europe. We managed to transform a debt-laden captive state on the outskirts of the Soviet empire into a country with a dynamic

economy resistant to external crises belonging to the North Atlantic Alliance – the greatest defensive alliances in the history of mankind – and an integration-oriented member of the European Union of free and equal nations that are among the world's most developed states.

During that period, Poland became a European leader in economic growth, tripling its gross national product per capita to the level where – in terms of buyer power – it oscillates around 79% of its Western European equivalent. We are in line to match this equivalent in the next decade.

To us, peace is therefore highly measurable. Nonetheless, we are more familiar than any other European nation with the costs of war. We are perfectly aware that armed aggression – in particular when comparable with the German aggression of 1939-1945 – implies losses so tremendous that they often remain irreparable for decades. That is why we must actively build an international security system where armed attack is increasingly unlikely. This system should not come down to membership in political and defensive alliances that ensure credible deterrence and effective defence from a potential aggressor. It should always include a measurable financial component in order to rule out the instrument of armed attack from every potential aggressor's rational calculation of profits and losses. In practice, this also means Poland's membership in organisations and coalitions capable of imposing sanctions against countries threatening peace. This is an indispensable component of keeping order in the world.

Members of the House, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The second principle we must follow in our foreign policy is the democratisation of international relations based on the sovereign equality of all states and nations. It is construed as the antithesis for all sorts of imperialisms, hegemonic aspirations, concerts of powers and their areas of influence. Such an approach to international politics is deeply rooted in our political tradition and traditional political system with its references to freedom and equality, encapsulated in such mottos as “Free with the free, equal with the equal” or “nothing about us without us”.

Adam Jerzy Czartoryski conveyed the essence of our anti-imperial tradition in plain yet utterly meaningful words when he wrote: "Any independent nation – like an individual in the common order – has the right to its own government and to build social happiness in a way it sees fit. No other nation, therefore, in no position to rule the former, much less to consider it its property or tool, has the right to interfere in what it deems good for the development of its own domestic prosperity and well-being. Under no pretext can foreign intervention forcibly impose a common system, which goes against nature and the law, to turn two different nations into a single society."

In our efforts to democratise international politics, we have been engaging other states in our region with particular intensity. This is not accidental. The nations of Central and Eastern Europe share unique anti-imperial traditions and experiences. We contribute them as our important input into the formation of the common good in Europe and the world.

That is why we consider ourselves to be the epicentre of important contemporary values that safeguard Europe from hegemonic tendencies, institutionalised advantages of large countries over medium and small ones, and from compromising with authoritarian regimes. We know better than others that the future of Europe cannot be built on a compromise between freedom and enslavement, but only after rejecting imperial traditions. This is why we want a Europe of equal and free nations that stand in solidarity with the victims of armed force, such as Ukraine today, and Georgia in 2008.

In 1919, shortly after Poland regained its independence, then Prime Minister Ignacy Jan Paderewski declared in the Sejm: "I am a representative of a nation who has always fought for the independence of other oppressed peoples. We are not imperialists and we do not intend to annex any foreign country or nation.[...] Poland has never been a partitioner and it will never become one." We stand by this tradition, and we will continue in this spirit!

That is why Poland never accepted – and will never accept – the division of countries into better and worse or between states with the right to fully and freely decide on their own destiny, security arrangements or alliances with those deprived of it. We presented this position in our recent capacity as non-permanent member of the UN Security Council and during our Chairmanship of the OSCE last year.

Members of the House,

The third principle of our foreign policy is legalism, understood in terms of observing international law. Peace-building is only possible through the application of principles that offer a level playing field to all states, providing them with opportunities to develop as well as ensuring prosperity for their citizens.

Above all, these principles are enshrined in the United Nations Charter, the CSCE Helsinki Final Act, and the Charter of Paris for a New Europe, as well as treaties on borders, good neighbourly relations, and friendly cooperation.

The most important provisions of these sources of international law guard sovereign equality and respect for laws based on sovereignty; refrain from using force and even the threat thereof; uphold the inviolability of borders and territorial integrity; call for peaceful resolution of conflicts and non-interference in domestic affairs.

We believe that the right to defend oneself is every nation's inalienable right that cannot be renounced or restricted. This also means the possibility of seeking membership in collective defence organisations, which makes effectively exercising that right possible. We will defend this not only for our own sake, but also for all countries aspiring to join NATO and the European Union. Since we are on the subject of universal rights, it should be said that no country can be deprived of them. We have been expressing this view for years and we will not cease doing so.

Madam Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House,

Since 2007, when Russian President Vladimir Putin took the floor at the Munich Security Conference, policies pursued by Russia posed the greatest threat to peace in Europe. They were directly oriented toward extorting changes to the continent's security architecture, thereby introducing a major imbalance in access to security. Russia sought to gain status in Europe for the purpose of curb its neighbour's freedom and security. Unfortunately, it gradually moved from words to action, becoming clear that it sought to coerce the international community into recognising Russia's direct neighbourhood as an exclusive area of influence.

We remember how the late Professor Lech Kaczyński, President of Poland, was the first to discern that ominous trend. He was also first to raise the alarm. In August 2008, on Freedom Square in Tbilisi – with Russian tanks approaching Georgia's capital – and surrounded by other presidents from the region, he called on Europe to bring Russian imperialism to a halt. He warned that if Russia was not stopped, its imperialism would not end in Georgia, but would continue, seeking Ukraine as its next prey, "followed by Baltic states, and then maybe also my country, Poland!"

One year later, in his address at Westerplatte marking the 70th anniversary of the outbreak of World War II, President Kaczyński appealed: "We must not yield to imperialism, nor even neo-imperial tendencies. The results are not always as quick and tragic as in the case of Munich. However, sooner or later such results always materialise. This is a tremendous lesson for modern Europe, for the whole world. War broke out a year after Munich, preceded by a pact signed on 23 August 1939, known as the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact [...] on the division of influence in a large part of Europe." "We must not yield to imperialism..." We frequently repeat these words in our foreign politics today because the security crisis in Europe has exacerbated severely. Today, Ukraine – and with it, all of Europe – pays a terrible price for failing to adhere to President Kaczyński's warnings which stemmed from our Central European experience with imperialism. Consequently, that experience is

an important component of our security – it allows us to discern approaching threats before others can see them.

During the last months of peace, Polish diplomacy - pursued by the President, Prime Minister, and the ministers of foreign affairs, national defence, and internal affairs - worked alongside our NATO allies, partners from the European Union, and the free world at large to make every possible effort and prevent the renewal of Russian aggression against Ukraine from happening. We tried to convince Russia just how catastrophic resorting to the use of war would be for itself, causing unnecessary casualties in Ukraine, and probably changing the global peace architecture in a way that would place us all in an increasingly more dangerous world where it would be more and more costly to maintain peace.

Our foreign policy sought to achieve two objectives. First, we were making efforts to encourage the international community to respond with determination should Russia resume the aggression.

Second, acting on behalf of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, where I assumed the position of Chairperson-in-Office last January, we sought to persuade the Russian authorities to give up their plans of resuming war.

Last February, I travelled to Moscow for talks with Minister Sergey Lavrov in my capacity as the incumbent OSCE Chair. He reassured me that Russia was not planning to recognise the independence of separatist political entities established on occupied Ukrainian territories and completely controlled by Russia. It soon turned out that his reassurance was not worth much. Russia was going to resort to armed aggression – an instrument prohibited by international law that would place Russia outside the community of countries incorporated in the OSCE that are interested in peace, security, and cooperation.

President Putin turned down peace and chose war, violating the UN Charter and other fundamental standards of international law. In these circumstances, our policies aim to create a situation in which it becomes

clear to everyone that his choice will lead Russia to strategic defeat, while Ukraine will prevail, survive, and move the spectre of war away from our borders.

It is with this prospect in mind that we support Ukraine in its fight against the Russian invasion, because for us, sovereign equality of states means that in practice the Ukrainian people should be free to choose their identity, political system, political affiliations and military alliances while deciding how long to fight and when to sit down to negotiate with Russia.

We are realists, therefore we do not believe that a compromise between freedom and enslavement is possible. This is a lesson we learned in the 20th century and one we remember.

It is with this mind-set that we have been holding talks with President Biden's administration on US concepts to develop a postwar security architecture in our part of Europe that would guarantee safe and peaceful growth for Ukraine and its western neighbours, including Poland, based on political and military engagement of the United States on the one hand, and on close US-supported political and military cooperation between the countries in our region and Ukraine on the other.

Like any nation in a crisis situation, Poland must define criteria for success on its own. For us, this includes the restoration of peace in Europe, respect for the norms of international law, and establishment of more systemic, institutional barriers that would protect Poland from another wave of imperialism. While pursuing this goal, we will cooperate with all of our allies in the transatlantic area, as well as with many non-European allies, in particular Japan, South Korea, and Australia. This is a true free world coalition!

Members of the House,

When putting the three principles of foreign policy that I described into practice, Poland utilizes a broad range of political instruments where membership in the UN and regional international organisations – NATO,

the European Union, and institutional forms of cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe– play a fundamental role.

For over seventy years, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization has been the most effective instrument for defending peace in Europe, as evidenced by its constant attractiveness for potential members and ongoing enlargement process, most recently concerning Finland and Sweden. In the case of the former, the rapid process ratifying Finland's accession to the Alliance is already over. In the case of the latter, the process is still ongoing, but rest assured that we are making every effort to convince our allies - Turkey and Hungary - who have yet to ratify agreements on Sweden's accession to NATO to do so without undue delay.

NATO is the key forum for our cooperation with the United States, Great Britain, and France - our allies that possess nuclear weapons and bear particular responsibility for peacekeeping because of the privilege of their permanent membership on the UN Security Council.

Moreover, the fact that Poland is situated on the North Atlantic Alliance's eastern flank imposes on us a special obligation in terms of maintaining our defence capacity at a suitably high level. Our armed forces must be capable to not only effectively defend our territory, but also come to the rescue when our allies are under attack. In political terms, this means unprecedented investment into our own defence capacity.

It is inspiring to see how Ukraine has been battling against the enemy's superior strength. We look in awe at how the Ukrainian people repulsed Russia's repeated storming of towns, civilian facilities, and critical infrastructure. Although written off by the high and mighty of this world and denied help in anticipation of a quick and inevitable defeat, our Ukrainian neighbours valiantly continue to stand. In spite of repeated blows designed to break their fighting spirit – and it must be stressed that they are often dealt in violation of all standards and conventions, in a purely criminal manner – the people of Ukraine continue to defend their Homeland!

By doing so, they prove that a medium-sized country neighbouring Russia can effectively hold off conventional Russian aggression as long as it possesses strong defence capacities, an alliance system, and political determination. They also testify to the importance of a national community's identity, history, and tradition in maintaining a state and for effectively opposing an invader.

As evidenced by the example of Ukraine, Poland is on the right – and straight – path. It is necessary to reinforce our Polish identity by instilling pride in our history and tradition in order to build our country's resilience to future threats.

That is why in NATO, Poland is a trustworthy ally that approaches its own security responsibly and understands the principle of indivisible security, recognizing the necessity to deepen transatlantic relations.

We will continue increasing our defence expenditure to a level of no less than 3% GDP – this year it will exceed 4% GDP. We will keep developing modern defence capacities, take part in NATO missions and operations, and support the Alliance's ability to respond to threats from all geographical directions. We encourage other allies to support the ambitious defence expenditure goal, where 2% will no longer be considered the maximum threshold, but the bare minimum.

Taking responsibility for the joint security of its allies, Poland has actively contributed to the formation of principles behind the Alliance's strategic documents and continues to do so.

Prior to last year's Madrid Summit, Poland suggested that the Alliance's eastern flank deterrence strategy be adapted by moving away from deterrence by the inevitability of counterattack, which presupposed part of the territory temporarily left occupied by the aggressor, to the concept of deterrence based on a readiness to defend every piece of NATO territory.

We found this adjustment of NATO strategy crucial after witnessing what happened in Bucha near Kyiv, where occupying Russian forces murdered

civilians. We must not allow this on our territory! And we have succeeded in convincing Allies to agree to our proposal! Adopted at the Madrid Summit, NATO's new strategic concept is about defence against an invading aggressor.

We will support the development of necessary command structures, troops, infrastructure, plans and exercises. Ahead of the Vilnius Summit in July, we would like to have a new Alliance forces model approved, ensuring that NATO is able to defend its territory from day one of any future aggression. Following NATO's decisions in response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the credibility of this concept was proven right. It was also possible since the NATO protective umbrella increases Allies willingness to support Ukraine while reducing the risk of Russia escalating the conflict to Allied territory.

In deployment decisions, neither the Alliance nor individual states can feel constrained by the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act. After all, it was Russia that violated the most important commitments contained in this document.

Any unilateral observance of restrictions on the deployment of NATO's combat forces to its eastern flank would be perceived as weakness and an incentive for further aggression, thus threatening NATO's security.

It was reckless when in 1997, before the Alliance was enlarged to include Poland, Czechia, and Hungary, Russia was granted leeway in addressing NATO with demands to reduce the numbers and capacities of Alliance forces allowed to be stationed on the territory of new member states. Still, the Alliance's unilateral continued observance of that political commitment towards Russia after the latter attacked Ukraine and annexed Crimea in 2014 led Moscow to a dangerous belief that the sphere-of-influence logic remained a legitimate political category in Russia's relations with the democratic world. In December 2021, that belief pushed Russia to deliver an ultimatum to the North Atlantic Alliance whereby Russia, threatening Ukraine with war, demanded withdrawal of NATO's troops from the Alliance's eastern flank countries, including Poland. It

was rejected and Russia attacked Ukraine. That situation is clear proof that Russia treats all its neighbours jointly, and by attacking Ukraine it poses a threat to the Baltic states, Finland, Sweden, Romania, and Poland.

This is why we will support proposals to denounce the 1997 Russia-NATO declaration. If Russia chooses to abide by international law again, we will need a new agreement anyway.

In a similar vein, we will continue to affirm the Alliance's open door policy, which proves its commitment to the principle that any state in NATO's neighbourhood fulfilling the necessary conditions can become a member.

That is why – let me emphasize once more – we do not accept ideas of dividing Europe into spheres of influence. We will support Ukraine in its efforts to join the Alliance and we welcome the fact that Finland has joined it while Sweden is about to become a member.

We support further enhancing NATO's cooperation with the European Union and we will continue to do so. On the one hand, Russia's aggression against Ukraine reaffirmed the fundamental role US military presence plays in our continent's security and stability. On the other hand however, it pointed to the fundamental flaw of the strategic autonomy concept – interpreted as a counterbalance to the transatlantic dimension of our geopolitics.

NATO remains absolutely necessary for collective defence. The European Union supports these efforts in their political, economic, and sanctions-related aspects and, jointly with NATO, in political and military aspects, such as launching – on Poland's motion – the EU Military Assistance Mission in support of Ukraine and using the European Peace Facility to refinance the supply of military equipment to Ukraine's armed forces.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Members of the House,

We are members of the European Union, because in our continent's current political make-up, being part of European integration is a society's

absolute expression of their aspirations to work together for the common good of all Europeans. This is also the position taken by the overwhelming majority of the Polish public and, by extension, any Polish government regardless of its political persuasions .

Nevertheless, we remember that the European Union is not a *sui generis* organisation. It was established and functions for free and equal nations united in diversity, deriving its strength from their political will as set out in the Treaties and within the limits of power conferred upon it therein. It is therefore an instrument through which its members jointly pursue their objectives. Implementing them is a common good for each of its members, as well as for all of them together.

In pursuit of its goals, Poland remains aware that, as Margaret Thatcher once said, while America was created by philosophy, Europe was created by history. Let me add, right away, that most often by the history of dominant and dominated nations.

Europe is mostly composed of small and medium-sized states whose policy goals matter just as much as those of countries with the greatest demographic, economic and political potential. That is why Poland's European policies seek and will continue seeking a *modus operandi* based on the consensus of all EU members and not on directions from various setups of Europe's players: pentagons, squares, triangles, let alone dictates from its most powerful members.

Similarly, Poland seeks and will seek to ensure that EU institutions in their undesired advocacy do not undermine the diversity of Member States and, above all, their constitutional identity.

Regardless of the temporary twists and turns in our relations with EU institutions, there is no alternative to such a political strategy. We joined the European Union and we will remain in it to enrich our Polish identity, not to limit it; to strengthen our centuries-old democracy rather than to let it dwindle; so that our standard of living and quality of life, which have been growing for three decades, will further improve rather than subside.

This political strategy can only have the desired effect if the freedom and equality of Member States is preserved. Undoubtedly, the largest deficit of freedom is revealed through the increasingly common procedure of decision making by majority voting, which results in growing inequality among members.

Small and medium-sized states disproportionately less capable of building effective coalitions, including blocking ones, are doomed to lose when attempting to defend their rights, interests or needs on their own. And when outvoted, their fate is decided by others, which means that their freedom is fundamentally violated.

The deficit of equality, in turn, is most clearly revealed by asymmetry across the euro zone, where fiscal and economic imbalances are ossifying. Since some states adopted the common currency, they have not been able to develop sustainably and harmoniously, while others run a permanent export surplus, counteracting the appreciation of their own currency thanks to the continuing economic stagnation in other states. It is therefore a system that radically reduces an essential component of equality – equal opportunity.

Therefore, Poland's policy in the European Union aims to preserve the freedom of Member States in resolutely defending the principle of unanimity where the current legal situation guarantees it and to actually extend the consensus formula to where the legal situation permits the application of qualified majority rule.

Similarly, it will be open to any reform initiatives protecting Member States equality, in particular to restore equal opportunity. This openness must not assume the exclusion of any solution, such as, for example, systemic, partial debt relief and a temporary or permanent return of some euro zone Member States to their national currencies.

Poland's defence of EU Member States freedom and equality best serves the European consensus, which in turn is a prerequisite and the basis for European unity.

Contrary to its critics, such consensus allows for effective EU policy, such as sanctions against Russia: ten rounds of economic, financial, and individual restrictions, or military support for Ukraine, for example through the already mentioned European Peace Facility (EPF) - initiatives that Poland played and continues playing a role in launching and leading.

Members of the House,

Next to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Union, our closest neighbourhood – Central and Eastern Europe – is the key point of reference for Poland's foreign policy. It is a region where our national identity was shaped and where the principles of our foreign policy were forged.

For our region, the fact that in the past centuries all the peoples inhabiting it – from Finns in the north to Greeks in the south, from Czechs in the west to Belarusians and Ukrainians in the east – experienced imperial treatment by their neighbouring powers (Germany, Russia, Turkey, and Austria) who placed force above the law is of cardinal importance. As a result, all nations of our region lost their independence a number of times. In 1815, for example, the terms of “European peace” made at the Congress of Vienna created a Kingdom of Poland in personal union with Russia. Poles received symbolic political autonomy, with the right to independent education and an army, but all that happened behind their back. This autonomy could only be enjoyed within the Russian empire. Poles in the Duchy of Poznań within Prussia received similar sham privileges, and a semblance of freedom was bestowed upon the residents of Kraków. Across the entire region, only one country - Montenegro - was able to enjoy its independence.

This shared experience helps us perceive imperialism as a fundamental threat to peace, security, international cooperation, political stability, civilizational development, and prosperity – a threat not only to nations and countries in our region.

After all, it was from our part of Europe that policies advocating imperialism culminated in launching the First and Second World Wars.

The division of Europe at Yalta, which was an integral part of the Cold War, was born here. Today, Russia's imperial aggression against Ukraine also carries global political, energy, and social implications linked to Moscow's attempts at triggering a food crisis.

Historically, this imperialism took on various forms, such as Western absolute monarchy and Eastern despotism, followed by totalitarianism in its Nazi or communist forms.

Whatever the form, it always devastated free political thought, democratic institutions, and republican political practices at home while depreciating, denigrating, and undermining their legacy in international discourse. Today, such a *modus operandi* is being used by Russia in an attempt to impose on Ukraine the principles of "*Russkiy mir*" and equate the democratic achievements of the Ukrainian state with Nazism and fascism.

Poland's foreign policy in our region therefore pursues two key goals for our *raison d'état*: local and global.

The first goal is limited to the empowerment of each country across the region and, above all, to the region as a whole. Only then can there be a shared responsibility for the fate of all our countries and solidarity with each one of them. The impressive solidarity of most countries in the region with Ukraine, which is defending itself against the Russian aggressor, shows that this policy could be successful. It is supported by a common historical experience showing that if one of the region's states is deprived of independence, it inevitably augurs the same fate for others.

The second goal is to ensure that the region's countries can collectively exert the strongest possible impact on shaping the policies of the free world, democratic Europe, and the North Atlantic Alliance.

On the one hand, this concerns the creation of a security architecture that is fit for the current, ever-increasing threat level in the region.

On the other hand, it involves the implementation of international economic development instruments to ensure our most dynamic integration not only within the European Union itself, but also the Western community as a region of political stability, social harmony, and prosperity.

Poland must derive political potential from its activity in the region. Poland must pursue policy initiatives that integrate interests, values, and political experiences with nations we share a past with and with whom we want to and will build a future together.

Let me strongly emphasise at this point: in its policy towards countries with greater political and economic potential, Poland should always be on the side of smaller Central and Eastern European states that were painfully afflicted by history. We must look sceptically on offers to participate in political alignments where its role would be tantamount to representing the interests and political concepts of states with domineering traditions.

Our policy aimed at strengthening the region's political potential proved its worth and made it possible to mount an effective coalition to support Ukraine in its defensive war. Our region provided the strongest political support for Ukraine. But the same goes for, proportionally speaking, military assistance – if we use national income criterion.

We remember how Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki and Deputy Prime Minister Jarosław Kaczyński, together with the Prime Ministers of Czechia and Slovenia, were the first heads of European governments to travel to Kyiv, which was then being encircled by the Russian army, in a show of solidarity and readiness to provide all possible assistance.

In this way, Poland, together with its partners from the region, symbolically defined membership in the coalition supporting Ukraine.

Those who call themselves members of the free world's coalition against imperialism and autocracy must travel to Kyiv and show their solidarity with the Ukrainian people who were fighting back the invading forces.

Poland was followed by others, including the heads of all European Union institutions and leaders of the free world. Most recently US President Joe Biden travelled the same route.

Members of the House, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Poland builds and reinforces regional formats of cooperation by developing links and amplifying the call of our region across the world, primarily within the European Union and NATO.

First and foremost, this includes the Three Seas Initiative, whose task is to harmonise our region's economic development across the EU. We will strive to make the Three Seas Initiative an institutional flywheel that will drive Ukraine's post-war reconstruction - a process that must take place in parallel with its EU accession, that is to say the expansion of appropriate infrastructure links. For this reason, we would also like Romania and Bulgaria to join the Schengen area reasonably fast.

The Bucharest Nine (B9) is yet another format that is currently a vehicle for our efforts in NATO toward improving security on the eastern flank, forging closer transatlantic cooperation, and integrating efforts to garner political support for Ukraine.

The Visegrad Group, the oldest format of regional cooperation, remains a tool of our foreign policy and we hope to be able to use its full potential again in the future.

We regret that Poland and Hungary have fundamentally different perceptions of Russia's aggression against Ukraine with regard to, both its origin and the desired final outcome. This divergence concerns the vital interests of Poland and Europe as a whole. Therefore, we will persuade our Hungarian partners to take a fresh look at the nature of the threats posed by Russia in order to fully use the potential of our relations and strengthen them.

Linking Poland, Lithuania and Ukraine, and also a democratic Belarus in the future, the Lublin Triangle is perceived by our Ukrainian neighbours,

who are fighting off Russia's invasion, as the antithesis to *Russkiy mir* and the imperial ideology behind it. Together with Lithuania, we will seek to make this format the closest instrument for harmonising strategies on political, military, and economic support for Ukraine's war of defence and its later reconstruction.

The recently established Riga Format plays a similar role and offers a platform for the gradual institutionalisation of political, military, energy, transport, cyber, and economic cooperation between Poland and all Baltic states.

The Trilogue, a format under which Poland works together with Romania and Turkey, carries similar significance. Poland has close and tested allies in the Black Sea region. They, like us, are interested in containing Russian imperialism and in promoting peace. That is why we will pursue enhancing our strategic relations with Turkey, a key ally with a special responsibility for security in the Baltic Sea and the broadly understood Middle East. We are engaged in a permanent dialogue with our Turkish allies to strengthen NATO, also through its expansion.

We enjoy strategic relations with Romania, which, just like Poland in the Baltic, has the greatest political, military, and economic potential in the Black Sea region. We will coordinate our positions on bolstering deterrence capabilities on NATO's eastern flank, as well as on EU policies. We will make our relationship closer in the spirit of the Polish-Romanian alliance tradition.

Members of the House,

Poland enjoys especially active cooperation with allied states that bear the extraordinary duty of defending peace in the world. Here I have in mind nuclear powers that are permanent members of the UN Security Council – the United States, Great Britain, and France.

The United States plays a special role in our thinking about the world and our foreign and security policies. It is a natural leader of the free world, a *de facto* European power, engaged for decades in the defence of the

continent's peace and security, and in safeguarding conditions for its optimal development.

Russian aggression against Ukraine reassured us in our belief that without the United States and its active engagement, the freedom of European nations would be in jeopardy.

The Polish-American alliance was, is, and always will be one of the cornerstones of European security. It not only rests on common strategic interests, but also on a similar perception of international politics, the pursuit of democratisation, rejection of imperialisms, concerts of power or spheres of influence, and most importantly, on the love of freedom.

Over the past several months, the United States, like Poland, provided unprecedented assistance to Ukraine, our neighbour assaulted by Russia.

We express our appreciation to President Joe Biden and his administration for America's support to resistant Ukraine. Never before has the US engaged to such an extent in the defence of peace across our eastern border and the right of nations to freedom and peaceful development in our part of the continent; in other words, in the taming of imperialism.

We are pleased to note that the experience of the Polish-US alliance influences America's position on Ukraine. It often draws from the motto that is so close to us: "Nothing about you, without you", "Nothing about Ukraine without Ukraine!" This motto resides in the traditions of many nations in our region. Poland's attachment to freedom and our traditional resistance to imperial oppression are still vibrant and continue to inspire the entire free world, including the United States!

A US missile defence base in Redzikowo, Poland, will be operational soon. Poland also hosts the relocated permanent forward headquarters of the US Army's Fifth Corps.

We will strive for a systemic and lasting presence of US troops on our territory. In our opinion, it will enhance United States credibility as leader of the free world and supplier of global strategic deterrence.

In this relationship, Poland is not merely a beneficiary of security ensured by the United States in Europe - independently and through the North Atlantic Alliance. We are a sovereign partner contributing to the common policy. This is particularly evident in the collaboration to procure US-made arms for the Polish armed forces, including F-35 aircraft, Patriot systems, Abrams tanks, and HIMARS rocket launchers.

For years Poland has been beefing up its energy cooperation with the United States, particularly by purchasing liquefied natural gas from American suppliers. Our cooperation with the United States has yielded tangible benefits for both sides as we faced the need to cut off supplies of Russian raw material. Contracts signed over the past few years ensure the annual purchase from the US of about half of Poland's total gas demand.

We were satisfied to note the correction in US policy regarding German-Russian energy cooperation after Russia invaded Ukraine. We also substantially contributed to the conviction that transatlantic cooperation should serve to limit Russia's share of raw materials in Europe, but most importantly in Poland's energy portfolio.

Nuclear power is a promising area of cooperation. The decision by Poland's authorities to choose US technology for building three reactors of Poland's first nuclear power plant will not only strengthen our energy security, but will also bind Poland and the US as even stronger partners due to its strategic nature and the exclusiveness of civil nuclear technology. Apart from that, we are also cooperating to design and buy small modular nuclear reactors (SMRs).

I am satisfied to note that the value of trade between Poland and the US, our eighth trading partner, has been steadily growing. The US also ranks second in terms of direct foreign investments. It means that despite Russia's aggression against Ukraine and the ongoing war on the other side of our eastern border, Poland provides favourable and safe conditions for direct American investments.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Members of the House,

Great Britain remains one of our key political partners. We regret that our cooperation has been limited after the UK left the European Union. Nonetheless, we fully respect the democratic choice made by the peoples of the United Kingdom to pursue a model and direction of development whereby following the European integration process simply became unattractive.

Great Britain remains one of Poland's closest partners due to strong historic and social connections – the Polish diaspora living in the United Kingdom – as well as its contribution to defending peace in Europe and worldwide.

It continues to confirm its key role for European security, systematically enhancing its engagement in defending NATO's eastern flank as well as military support for Ukraine. In terms of the latter, it has been one of the leaders alongside the US and Poland.

In the autumn of 2021, the British government was the fastest of all our Western allies in responding to a hybrid attack by Belarus, sending a company of army engineers to help secure the Polish-Belarusian border. Last year, the British deployed in Poland the Sky Sabre aircraft and missile defence system, additional ground forces, and Challenger II tanks. British aircraft were sent to reinforce the defence of Poland and Romania's airspace. Great Britain also enhanced its military presence in Estonia as NATO's framework nation there.

In terms of our foreign policy, we should highlight common goals and methods that emerged in the wake of Russia's resumed aggression against Ukraine. While other allies feared that supplying arms to Ukraine would be a wasted effort since the country was incapable of defending itself, the British government shared our opinion that Ukraine will mount an effective resistance.

Since Russia resumed its aggression, Great Britain, along with Poland, has been among the leading suppliers of military, financial, and humanitarian

aid to Ukraine. For years, Great Britain and Poland worked together to train tens of thousands of Ukrainian soldiers. We will continue this cooperation, especially within the new format that envisions close political ties between Great Britain, Poland, and Ukraine.

We welcome the fact that increased trade between our countries follows our thriving political cooperation. Despite the Covid-19 pandemic and leaving the European Union's single market, Great Britain remains the fourth largest market for Polish exports. Due to this fact, and taking into account the importance of security cooperation, Poland is vitally interested in the amicable resolution of EU-UK disputes on the implementation of agreements between the two parties: the Withdrawal Agreement of 2019 and the Trade and Cooperation Agreement of 2020.

Members of the House,

The past two years saw an enhancement in Poland-France political, military, and economic cooperation between Poland and France (including within the Weimar Triangle). Russia's aggression against Ukraine contributed to the strengthening of relations between our countries.

We share a situational assessment and the policy to provide Ukraine with all possible support from the international community, including EU member states and institutions, and the North Atlantic Alliance.

We have been closely cooperating with France to expand the coalition of countries willing to donate modern equipment to Ukraine, which is indispensable to wage an effective war of defence. We are especially trying to convince our German allies to follow suite.

We are satisfied to see the evolution of France's position on EU enlargement, in particular its support for the decision to grant Ukraine EU candidate status. Russia attempts to impose on us a kind of interpretation of European policy that rules out Ukraine's membership in Western institutions. Therefore, France's firm stance rejecting this vision of Europe is so important for the future of our continent.

At the same time, we are sceptical towards French initiatives to usher in talks between Russia and Ukraine in some form. Unfortunately, we do not note any signals from Russia that display a readiness to revise its policy of territorial conquest. However, should such talks be held, they must not be tied to any special assurances from Russia apart from respecting international law, which guarantees peace for all other countries.

On the other hand, we highly value France's increasing engagement in NATO's policy of deterring Russia. France is present on NATO's eastern flank as a framework nation through its presence in Romania and Estonia, where it takes part in aerial and maritime policing. What's more, the participation of French air forces in patrolling the airspace over Poland is noted and appreciated.

We are enhancing our cooperation in the arms sector and coordinating of military, technical, and industrial exchanges. One key area is the space sector. Towards the end of last year, a contract was signed providing for the acquisition by Poland of two ground surveillance satellites, including on-the-ground infrastructure, to significantly increase Polish armed forces' intelligence capacity, with plans to also be used in civil applications.

It should be appreciated that reinvigorated political relations with France are followed by increased contacts and economic cooperation. Our trade has been rising and reached record levels last year. We will strive to ensure that Polish-French cooperation also includes rebuilding Ukraine. France is uniquely experienced in this regard, while Poland – because of its geographic location and joint border with Ukraine – can provide French entrepreneurs operating in Ukraine with exceedingly favourable conditions.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Members of the House,

The Federal Republic of Germany is one of our most important allies and political partners. The last three decades deserve, beyond any doubt, to be called an outstanding era in our relationship's history, which dates back more than a millennium.

We have been integrating within the EU and we hold political dialogue through the Weimar Triangle format. We are allies in NATO – more than 20 years ago, Poland assumed from Germany the responsibility of securing the Alliance's eastern flank. Year after year, we have broken trade records.

I could close my thoughts on our mutual relations with the above observation, stating that our policies will strive to foster all these positive tendencies and achievements of the past three decades. However, due to the special nature of Polish-German relations, their history and importance for the future of Europe, and indeed for the international order, I must elaborate.

A substantial part of the international law provisions currently in force were formed in connection with or upon experiencing Germany's policies, that is to say ones that affected Poland and Poles in particular. Therefore, it is our duty to make efforts toward shaping Polish-German relations in a way that could be called the role-model of international relations.

What should be done then to achieve such an exemplary state of relations? There are three fundamental issues.

First, we agree with Chancellor Olaf Scholz that Russia's aggression against Ukraine is an act of disgrace and a turning point in the history of Europe. We share his opinion that in Europe nothing will ever be the same, therefore the European security architecture and Allies' defence policy must change to provide Ukraine with effective assistance and prevent the conflict from spreading across the continent. We were satisfied to note the announcement of the "Zeitenwende", or an epoch-making change in German politics.

For years, we have urged our German partners to make this turn.

Therefore, we welcome German politicians admitting their mistakes and the ultimate failure of the policy of rapprochement with the Soviet Union and later Russia, consistently pursued from the times of Willy Brandt.

We insisted on abandoning the practice of turning a blind eye to Russia's aggressive policies, which gathered momentum year after year. We pointed out the immediate threat for peace in Europe posed by the Nord Stream project. The construction of its first pipeline continued despite Russia's aggression against Georgia in 2008, with the full support of German government, which then offered Russia a Partnership for Modernisation as a kind of reward.

The construction of Nord Stream's second pipeline was inaugurated by Germany one year after Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the annexation of Crimea and occupation of the Donbas, when Russia was already sanctioned by the EU.

The German government would ignore our warnings, prioritising its cooperation with Russia and the resulting economic benefits over the defence of peace in Europe and the security of its allies and partners, including Poland and the other countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

That is why today, we expect that our security and interests will be key to German state policy. It is possible and also much needed. This kind of German policy, based on empathy for its allies' interests, is one that we are looking forward to.

The first significant step of this policy would be a shift in Germany's position on the NATO-Russia Founding Act, which introduced restrictions on the deployment of NATO's "substantial combat forces" on its eastern flank. The German government defended this declaration in the past, despite the fact that Russia attacked Crimea and is now bombing Kyiv. Nobody will welcome such a change in German policy more warmly than Poland, the countries of NATO's eastern flank and especially Ukraine. I declare that we will back a German initiative to make this document a thing of the infamous past.

Second, German authorities justified on countless occasion the prioritization of Russia in their foreign policy towards Central and Eastern Europe by providing both redress for moral damages and compensation

to Moscow due to the attack on the Soviet Union by the German Reich in 1941.

Such arguments even served as a justification even for the construction of the Nord Stream pipelines. While respecting the ethical motivations of German policies and acknowledging the need to compensate for the moral and material damage caused by Germany during the Second World War, one must conclude that the credibility of such motivations is based on an equal approach to the cope of damage inflicted and all victims regardless of their religion, nationality, origin or citizenship. The Germans owe Poland and Poles, or Ukrainians for that matter, no less than Russians.

Unfortunately, the debt owed by Germany to Poland is still due. The fact places a dramatic burden on our mutual relations. This is proven by further House resolutions calling on the need to settle the problem of compensation to Poland for the losses it suffered as a result of German aggression and occupation in 1939–1945.

Exercising the will of this House, expressed in a resolution on 14 September 2022, we officially requested Germany in early October to begin talks on “unambiguously accepting the political, historic, legal and financial liability” for all moral and material damage caused to Poland and its citizens as a result of provoking the Second World War by the Third German Reich. And to regulate this issue by way of treaty.

In early January, we received an official response to our request, in which the government of the Federal Republic stated that it was not interested in talks on this subject because it considered the matter of compensation for the consequences of the German attack on Poland closed and settled.

There is therefore a difference of opinion between Poland, a victim of German attack, and Germany, the aggressor and perpetrator of damage and suffering. The problem exists and we will consistently seek its resolution. In fact, no moral system or legal order allows a situation in which the perpetrator of a crime, and thus the aggressor, is the only one to decide on the moral or material liability for the victims.

We will also work to convince our German partners that settling the problem of German compensation to Poland and Poles is not only in our mutual interest, but also in the universal interest of the international community.

Our goal after all is to create a system in which starting wars will be unprofitable, with the aggressor knowing that they must always pay the price of compensation for the moral and material damages they inflicted. This is what we are going to enforce on Russia in respect to Ukraine. The same is necessary in relations between Germany and Poland.

Third, I would like to present to you, Ladies and Gentlemen, Members of the House, our attitude in more detail toward German leadership aspirations in Europe.

As already mentioned, we will carefully observe the announced turning point in Germany's policy. At the same time, we hope that it will also mean abandoning Germany's current practice of nationalising the benefits of EU integration and of willingly sharing its costs and the consequences of German mistakes with other Member States.

This current practice is one of the reasons, among other things, why Europe is not generally interested in entrusting Germany with the continent's leadership. Therefore, we consider it beyond any doubt that Europe does not need Germany's leadership, nor restricting Member States' equality in matters critical to their independence by extending majority voting as the decision-making method used in the EU. It is significant that Germany does not propose the same decision-making "improvement" in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization where it advocates for unanimity.

Germany is and will remain our ally and an important political partner, but we will strive for the kind of bilateral relations in which the notion of partnership will be equally understood by both sides - as a relationship of two equal entities. We will consequently encourage our German partners to take a historic turn in their policy, especially towards Poland and its

interests. We believe that such a change is in the interest of both countries and Europe.

Madam Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House,

I would like to briefly discuss our policy towards other allied countries. Our partners' attitude toward Russia's aggression against Ukraine and their level of commitment to helping Ukrainians counter the attacks is our key criterion for determining the scope and intensity of our bilateral cooperation in the near future.

We must note with satisfaction that, since Russia's aggression against Ukraine, we could count on good concerted cooperation with Canada, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Italy, Spain, Greece, Portugal, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg. Together we underline the significance of NATO for European security, emphasizing the need for efficient coordination between EU defence initiatives and the Alliance's plans and actions. We are also united in our efforts to bring to justice all perpetrators of crimes against peace, meaning those responsible for the Russian attack on Ukraine, and war crimes committed by the Russian forces during this war.

Canada plays an important role in NATO, the policy of deterrence, and countering Russian aggression against Ukraine. Our relations with Canada are excellent as we cooperate in the context of NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence, training Ukrainian soldiers together, providing assistance to refugees, and delivering necessary arms to fighting Ukraine. We will undoubtedly develop and strengthen our alliance with this country.

Our cooperation with Northern European countries is exemplary and not only increases our common security in its basic meaning, but is already contributing to enhancing the continent's energy security. This is ensured especially by common projects with Denmark and Norway with whom we have recently completed the Baltic Pipe and are now working on ambitiously developing offshore wind energy. At the same time, we are sure that Sweden's and Finland's membership in NATO will fill a gap in

the institutional architecture of cooperation in our region. It is for this reason that last May, we declared our full readiness to give both countries our military support should they be attacked pending the NATO accession process.

In relations with Spain and Italy, we will uphold the tradition of regular intergovernmental consultations. Poland and Spain are part of an EU group called “friends of cohesion policy”, which is based on the conviction that it is crucial to maintain mechanisms of EU action for the development of entrepreneurship and innovation, also in less economically advanced regions.

Poland’s political cooperation with Italy and Spain may also ensure that the reflection on further tightening integration within the EU, often monopolised by the most influential EU Member States, will become more pluralistic. We are convinced that Italy and Spain will be our unwavering allies in this regard.

As for the Kingdom of Netherlands, we are both engaged in a regular expert dialogue on European and security-related questions as part of the Utrecht Conference, which will take place for the 32nd time this year when hosted by Poland.

In this context, I would like to stress that we will enhance our political dialogue with strategic partners in Asia – Japan and the Republic of Korea. They share our assessment of Russia’s aggression against Ukraine and are strengthening their cooperation with NATO, as confirmed by the Alliance’s summit in Madrid last year.

Japan, thanks to assuming non-permanent membership at the UN Security Council, has gained in importance as a country co-shaping the discussion on the most important challenges to international security.

We will also continue developing our economic cooperation, including by attracting more Japanese and South Korean investments, as well as striving to improve Poland’s energy security, as evidenced by the announcement of plans to the construct a nuclear power plant in

cooperation with our Korean partners. The Republic of Korea is also becoming our increasingly important defence partner – deliveries of South Korean weapons will help modernise our armed forces and strengthen Poland's security, thereby improving NATO's deterrence and defence capabilities on the eastern flank.

In 2022, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of establishing diplomatic relations between Poland and Australia. Together with the country's strong military, economic, and humanitarian support for Ukraine, this testifies to our close relations. We hope that next year will see further strengthening of bilateral cooperation in the political, economic, and people-to-people dimensions. This could be achieved by organising visits at the highest level.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Members of the House,

Poland's tradition of resisting the dictatorship of political powers and our attachment to the principle of sovereign freedom and equality of states - the equal right of nations to decide on their own model of development, alliances and membership in integration institutions - requires that we oppose determining final borders of the European Union and NATO by consistently promoting the open door policy and supporting the membership aspirations of both the Eastern European countries and the Western Balkans.

We support Western Balkan integration efforts. For this reason, we welcome the recent admission of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a candidate to the European Union and the launch of accession talks with Albania and North Macedonia as well as the decision on lifting visa requirements starting in 2024 for the citizens of Kosovo, with which Poland established consular relations a few months ago.

We still support the security of this country with our military and police presence as part of NATO and EU missions. We invariably oppose politicizing the enlargement process and advocate maintaining its technical character, also in talks with Serbia and Montenegro, while at the

same time encouraging the region's governments to double their efforts towards democratisation.

We notice Russia's activity, which includes causing conflicts and spreading disinformation in the Balkans. It is harmful to the region's countries and aims at keeping the positive transformation as far from its borders as possible. We warn our Balkan partners of their vulnerability to this and remain ready to share with them our experience of countering disinformation and supporting European integration, for example through bilateral instruments and the Berlin Process.

Members of the House,

The Eastern Partnership, of which Poland was an initiator and guiding spirit in the European Union, prepared Ukraine and Moldova for EU candidate status.

Thanks to past political investments in the Eastern Partnership instrument, it was possible for President Andrzej Duda to immediately propose that the European Union grant Ukraine candidate status in response to Russian aggression. The proposal was adopted by EU countries and the European Commission.

It was upon Poland's initiative that, when Ukrainian cities were being bombed, Europe made a decision it had been afraid to make before. This amounted to a mental revolution that is not only transforming our region, but will also – of this I am sure – change Europe.

Now, Ladies and Gentlemen, allow me to say a few words about how I see future relations between Poland and Ukraine and the government's policy in this regard.

First of all, the Republic of Poland will continue to do its best to help Ukraine defeat Russia and regain sovereignty throughout all of its internationally recognised territory.

We will also strive to enable Ukraine to join as soon as possible the structures of the free world, represented in our region by such institutional formats as the European Union and NATO.

We will do so because it is in Poland's most vital, existential interest. A safe Ukraine means a safe Poland and a peaceful Europe. This is therefore our *raison d'état*. It is why Poland is Ukraine's ally in its defence of peace and preventing Russian imperialism while striving to protect the rules of international law. And glory to Ukraine for such successful resistance!

We wish that Ukraine will be more than just a partner within the EU and NATO in the future; more than just a good neighbour with whom we have friendly relations and good economic cooperation.

Our aim is to shape mutual relations in a way that eliminates any potential for considerable frictions between Poland and Ukraine in the context of interpreting history or over the situation of citizens identifying themselves with the Polish language, culture, and tradition. Poles and Ukrainians should be able to say that not only their homeland, but also their partner's country feels like home.

Russian aggression closely united the two nations and generated enormous social capital of friendliness and trust. We are facing a chance, a unique one in the last centuries, to rebuild the Polish-Ukrainian community destroyed by the German and Russian partitioners, and by the Bolshevik totalitarian regime.

Hundreds of years of common history prove however, that when Poles and Ukrainians work together, it improves the security and well-being of the entire region as well as our position compared to Western countries. When, in turn, we are divided by disputes and conflicts, it only reinforces the Eastern despot and strengthens Moscow, as the great Ukrainian writer Panteleimon Kulish argued back in the 19th century. In the face of Russian imperialism, the republican tradition of the First Polish Republic becomes appealing to all nations which are bound by it, that is Ukrainians, Poles, Lithuanians, and Belarusians. This idea demonstrates a potential that we

would like to develop, making it the foundation of future close political cooperation.

Therefore, in the 21st century, a community of Poland and Ukraine should take the form of permanent cooperation between two nations closely related to each other in terms of language, culture, and mentality, living in two sovereign states.

It was in this spirit that during President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's state visit in Poland, we talked about a new approach to bilateral relations, including on history and commemorating victims of wars, repressions, and murders.

Members of the House, Ladies and Gentlemen,

A new task for Polish diplomacy will consist of using the Partnership instruments in a way to support Ukraine and Moldova in their EU accession process, and Georgia in continuing the implementation of pro-European reforms so that it could also receive candidate status in the future.

We want to see Moldova's successful modernisation as a good, motivating example for Eastern European nations. We need Moldova's success as a guarantee that Russia will not use it to open a new front line in its war against Ukraine and Europe.

That is why we are committed to consistently supporting the process of pro-European reforms in Moldova. Is it particularly important as political, economic, and energy pressure from Russia intensifies. In 2022, we offered Chisinau financial and organisational support amid an influx of Ukrainian refugees.

Poland is a leading donor of development assistance to Moldova, especially in the fields of regional policy, rural development, urban revitalisation, and in creating an efficient system of civil protection. In Chisinau, we operate a dynamic branch of Solidarity Fund PL. We are also sharing the know-how of Poland's transformation.

We encourage our EU partners to further support the integration efforts of these countries, which will bring us closer to the common goal of expanding the security zone, stability, and prosperity in Europe.

At the same time, we would like to develop mutually beneficial contacts with Armenia and Azerbaijan, hoping for progress in their peace process.

Looking at our neighbour's neighbours, the Eastern Partnership countries, we intend to continue political and economic cooperation with Central Asian countries, in particular with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

Members of the House,

Our relations with Belarus are a separate issue. Our long-term goal is a democratic, free, and independent Belarus. Poland will not be safe until its neighbours are free and sovereign! Until they are able to democratically decide on their political system and the direction of their development.

We have no doubt that Belarusians belong in the common European home, whose tradition is also made up of our former republican heritage. Poland will consistently strive to bring about this future in Belarus, providing shelter to all those who cannot feel at home in this country and who are in danger while in Belarus because of their political views.

Today, we perceive Belarus as a country completely dependent on aggressive Russia. It is governed by a regime without any democratic or social legitimacy that turned the Belarusian homeland into a great prison, making its territory available for Russian attacks against Ukraine.

Some time ago, we addressed the Belarusian authorities with an offer aimed at giving them more political and economic space in return for stopping repression and persecution. Unfortunately, the outcome of these talks was unsatisfactory. Belarusian authorities continue repressions against their own society and a hostile policy towards Poland, which includes the border crisis provoked by the Lukashenko regime. These will impact our relations.

Such policy can only be put to an end through democratic transformation in Belarus, which would allow the country to once again benefit from cooperation within the Eastern Partnership.

That is why Poland supports and will continue to support independent Belarusian civil society circles, including the media, refugees, university students, and entrepreneurs.

We will call for the release of political prisoners, including Polish diaspora activists, and Andrzej Poczobut in particular.

If Belarusian authorities keep on refusing his release, continue repressions against its own citizens, including representatives of the Polish minority; if they continue provoking attacks by migrants at Poland's border, we will consistently seek to have the European Union impose further sanctions, and we will employ a full range of reprisals at our sovereign disposal.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Members of the House,

The Russian Federation's aggressive policy remains the greatest threat to peace in Europe, including Poland's security.

Over one year ago, on 24 February 2022, Russia launched a brutal invasion of Ukraine, demonstrating once again its aim to subdue neighbouring nations, with Poland falling victim to this aspiration many times in the past.

During the invasion, we saw images that we knew from our own history, often from our families' personal experience. Murder, plunder, rape, torture, deportation, destruction of civilian infrastructure and contempt for human life. In our part of the world, we know all too well what Russia's aggression entails and how it wages war. Last year, Russia showed once again its aggressive face, which seeks to realise its strategic interests through war, not peace.

That is why limiting and stopping Russia's imperial aspirations has been an invariable goal of our foreign policy. The Polish government believes that until Russia stops its aggression against Ukraine, withdraws its

troops from internationally recognised Ukrainian territory, including the Crimean Peninsula, it will remain beyond the community of civilised nations. We will pursue this goal in our policy, countering premature proposals to rebuild bridges with Russia.

At this point, I would like to emphasise that we do not think of Russia as a country forever doomed to imperial despotism and pariah status. We do not believe in Russia's fatalistic destiny. We distinguish between the Russia that exists today and the country it could become. Today's Russia must suffer a strategic defeat, both on the front line and by bearing long-term costs from imposed sanctions.

The Russia that could exist will hopefully become a normal democratic state. It can be the Russia of Andrei Sakharov and Anna Politkovskaya, the Russia of Memorial, only once it withdraws its troops from all of Ukraine's territory, renounces the so-called "liberation" of other countries and their territories, compensates for its aggression, and after all perpetrators are punished. This Russia will be a normal member of the international community and it is such a Russia that we would like to cooperate with. But this Russia does not exist!

Members of the House,

We attach great importance to tightening relations with the other countries of the BRICS group. Soon, we plan to conduct high-ranking nominations for ambassadors to two countries of this Group, highlighting their importance in our policy.

We appreciate the significance of our relations with China, one of the most powerful countries in the world and a permanent member of the UN Security Council. For this reason, China bears particular responsibility for maintaining peace in the world. We hope that it will be more active in its reactions to the destruction of peace by Russia.

Therefore, in our dialogue with China, we will try to convince it that the consequences of war in Ukraine go beyond the region. Permission to use war as a political tool, to change borders by force, and to apply revisionism

would have ramifications that are difficult to predict, not just for Europe, but also for Asia.

Poland values China's declarations on the respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states. We also appreciate Beijing's clear objection to the use or threats of using nuclear weapons in international relations. However, we would like to see Beijing directly apply international law principles with regard to Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

I would like to stress that the Ukrainian issue was one of the most important topics raised in the political dialogue with China in 2022. However, we welcome the high level of Polish-Chinese communication during the pandemic, maintained despite severe restrictions introduced by Chinese authorities due to the COVID-19 pandemic concerning contacts with foreign countries.

After lifting the restrictions, we expect a swift return to regular and direct contacts with China in areas such as diplomacy, business, tourism, and education.

China's return to regular in-person contacts with the world is particularly important to us in order to overcome the greatest challenge that is fostering sustainable economic relations with that country, also by our other European partners. We are closely interested in following the intensification of Spanish, German, and French policies towards China.

Despite the emergence of some positive trends such as the growth of Polish exports to China, 2022 was not the best in this regards due to rapidly growing deficit in this area on the Polish side.

During the third Poland-China Intergovernmental Committee meeting in June 2022, I communicated to my Chinese counterpart, Minister Wang Yi, that Poland expects China to be more open to solving problems in bilateral economic relations.

For us, effectiveness in this area will serve to measure of the quality of the Polish-Chinese strategic partnership. It will also play a decisive role in

defining the level of Poland's future engagement in regional cooperation with China in formats such as Central and Eastern Europe-China.

With regard to China, our policy will continue using the European Union's dialogue mechanisms and cooperation instruments since, in areas such as trade policy, the interests of member states are pursued via the European Union.

Poland will continue to co-shape the new framework of these relations based on competition and systemic rivalry, as well as cooperation. The overriding principles of reciprocity and a level playing field will serve as our guide. At the same time, we will ensure that strategic decisions made in Brussels concerning China adequately reflect the interests of Poland and our region.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Members of the House,

We see immense potential through cooperation with India in the political, economic, and cultural areas. India is the world's largest democracy, rightfully aspiring to take an adequate and proportional share in shaping the democratic debate on the world's most serious challenges and to have its increasing global role reflected in global institutions. Poland supports these aspirations while recognizing India's potential to become a model of harmonizing very diverse interests of social, national, and religious groups. One could say that today's India is a laboratory of future global democratic policy. New Delhi's international role was strengthened after India assumed the presidency of the G20 and of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.

The launch of a new passenger connection with Mumbai operated by LOT Polish Airlines and the relaunch of a direct route with New Delhi were good signs of further reinvigorating economic cooperation with India in 2022. We developed our relations with India. Evidence of that development was the first visit of the head of Polish diplomacy to New Delhi in nine years that I paid in April 2022, also as the OSCE Chairman-in-Office.

As OSCE Chairman, I also took part in the international Raisina Dialogue conference. My main goal was to present Poland's perspective on Russia's aggression against Ukraine to a wide circle of influential global political and media representatives.

An important topic of my meetings was also the review of Polish-Indian relations. The year 2023 will be yet another one in which we hope to continue regular high-level contacts between our two countries.

In recent years, contacts between Poland and Brazil significantly intensified, which was confirmed during meetings held at various levels. In March, I met with Brazil's Foreign Minister Carlos França, who visited Warsaw in connection with a delivery of humanitarian aid to Ukraine and to coordinate the evacuation of Brazilian citizens to their homeland.

In August, Polish-Brazilian political and economic consultations were held in Brasília at the deputy foreign minister level. In September, during President Andrzej Duda's meeting with President Jair Bolsonaro in New York, two agreements aimed at facilitating economic cooperation were signed.

It is in Poland's interest to maintain the high level of momentum in our relations with Brazil. It is our most important trading partner in Latin America and it will probably regain the status of a leading country in the Global South as a result of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva assuming the presidency in January 2023. Our friendly relations with Brazil are also influenced by the large Polish community there, consisting of about two million Brazilians of Polish descent who cherish Polish traditions in various ways.

Poland views the Republic of South Africa as its priority partner in Africa, both with regard to bilateral relations and South Africa's strategic partnership with the EU. Poland and South Africa share a long tradition of bilateral and multilateral cooperation. The two countries cooperated on many initiatives within the UN, in particular in the field of human rights protection. We welcome South African investments in Poland and the steady increase in trade volume between our countries.

Members of the House,

Poland views member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as promising trade and investment partners. The development of bilateral economic cooperation will diversify Poland's trade, thus far focused on the EU market, thereby increasing its resilience to disturbances in the global economy. Although we share certain common values, including the need to maintain a world order based on international law, which was stressed during the first-ever EU-ASEAN Summit held in December 2022, there are also differences of opinion between us, e.g. on how to respond to Russia's aggression against Ukraine. This is something we must consistently work on.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Members of the House,

Poland hopes for constructive cooperation with Israel's government, a collaboration pursued in the spirit of our centuries-old shared history as well as mutual understanding and respect. We believe that bilateral relations and settling disputes can only be pursued through honest dialogue between equals. We welcome the process to normalise and reinforce relations between Israel and the Arab states.

Poland traditionally supports the Middle East peace process and maintains its position that only a two-state solution will ensure a permanent and just agreement between the Israeli and Palestinian nations. We strongly condemn violence, terrorist acts and any unilateral actions that could exacerbate the conflict, as well as any violations of international law. Likewise, Poland will decidedly object to attempts at pushing Israel to the sea and forcing Palestinians off the land they have inhabited for hundreds of years. This is why we will continue to support the authorities and inhabitants of the Palestinian National Authority and will react to any acts of discrimination as well as violations of international and humanitarian laws.

Russia's aggression against Ukraine highlighted that relations with Middle East countries are of key importance for the diversification of our energy sources.

The Polish government will continue to enhance cooperation with Saudi Arabia, our major partner in the region, in the belief that the state's growing interest in fostering relations with Central European countries will contribute to improving our energy security. The development of national gas infrastructure will also enable us to exploit Qatar's and Egypt's dynamically growing potential in the process of making the Europe's energy sector independent from Russian gas. We also support regional cooperation initiatives in the gas industry and their prospects for developing the European energy sector as well as their potential to mitigate regional conflicts.

Through cooperation in the energy sector we will strive to strengthen our economic and political relations with Middle East and North African countries. The impressive scale of transformation the Arabian Peninsula states have undergone and the economic development of Egypt, one of our biggest partners in Africa, offer important opportunities for further geographical diversification of our foreign trade relations. Regional stability and combatting terrorism there remain key to the success of these endeavours. For this reason we will continue with our involvement in international efforts in both respect. We also welcome social and cultural changes among Arab Peninsula countries, particularly those improving the situation of women.

Members of the House,

Dialogue with non-European countries, for whom Russia's aggression against Ukraine is a geographically remote event, is an enormous political challenge. A recently published report by the Polish Institute of International Affairs shows that the Russian propaganda machine is effectively exploiting the shortage of information about the causes and course of war in an attempt to drive a wedge between non-European countries on the one hand, and on the other hand, Ukraine and the coalition of the free world that supports its defence on the other. Poland will continue to actively counteract these scheming activities by Russia.

Unlike many Western European countries, Poland was never a colonial power; we did not oppress nations in Africa, South America or Asia. Because of our own experience of racist policies pursued by European powers, Poland has a significant credibility potential that we will actively use. Poland-Rwanda relations could serve as a model example of our international interactions. We treat each other with mutual respect and our Rwandan partners perceive Poland as a European friend that is not burdened with a colonial tradition and approach to African countries. We enjoy similar partner relations with Sudan and other African countries. Therefore, we will continue reinforcing our political activity in this area. Events serving to achieve this goal include President Duda's attendance at the Least Developed Countries Forum held recently in the United Arab Emirates, visits of the Prime Minister and other members of the Polish government to the Gulf states and African countries, and their taking part in fora that bring together heads of state and government as well as ministers of non-European states.

We will develop Polish initiatives improving access to grain for the region's countries as their inhabitants have been severely affected by soaring food prices. Our diplomacy will also continue with development support, committing to putting an end to regional conflicts.

Activities in this respect remain vital to limiting irregular migration to Europe that destabilises our continent, impairs its security and is used by our enemies to undermine the unity of the European Union and by attacking our borders.

Poland reiterates its willingness to engage in dialogue with Iran. We support diplomatic efforts to strengthen the non-proliferation regime of weapons of mass destruction and to reinstate the nuclear deal. At the same time, we are concerned with the internal situation in Iran. We call on Iranian authorities to refrain from using violence against peaceful demonstrators and to respect fundamental human rights.

We are also concerned about some actions undertaken by Iran in its foreign policy. In particular, we oppose military support provided to

Russia in its criminal aggression against Ukraine. Polish diplomacy hopes for a reflection and adjustment of Iran's policy, since in the past it also suffered from external aggression.

Poland notices the growing importance of Sub-Saharan Africa as a region that co-decides more and more on how to address global issues and contributes to the democratisation of international relations. Poland will support stabilisation processes and strengthening the economic potential of Sub-Saharan African countries, as well as initiatives to mitigate the effects of food crisis.

Countries like Senegal and Nigeria, which President Duda visited last year, are our promising partners, e.g. in the diversification of energy sources. As a country built on the tradition of liberty, we are concerned to see Russia's actions toward these and other countries in the region - quasi-colonial in their logic and aimed at subduing African states, exploiting them and ruining their standards of good governance.

In relations with Latin American partners, our interest traditionally focuses on economic cooperation and support for the Polish community there. However, we want to put greater emphasis on developing political dialogue since the region's countries, supporting peaceful coexistence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, will play an increasingly important role in strengthening the rules-based international order. The EU-CELAC (the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States) Summit, scheduled to be held in Brussels this year - the first since 2015 - will offer an opportunity to boost cooperation with our partners in the region.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Members of the House,

United Nations principles remain the foundations of today's international order and Poland's security. We will continue to defend them and use the UN forum to oppose Russia's aggression against Ukraine, which violates these principles.

To this aim, together with our partners we plan to use the UN General Assembly where Russia does not have the right of veto. The UN General

Assembly's almost unanimous condemnation of the Russian attack on Ukraine clearly showed that a policy of aggression is rejected by the international community. We will also take steps to prevent the election of Russia and its candidates to UN bodies. At the same time, we will support measures to overcome the present crisis in the UN, backing up sensible proposals concerning its reforms. Without a well-functioning UN System, peace and respect for international law will be permanently threatened.

Last year, we effectively contributed to adopting a number of vital documents in this regard, both at the UN level and in other multilateral organisations. As a result of Poland's initiative and our intensive diplomatic efforts, it was possible to bring about Russian Federation's suspension in its rights to membership in the UN Human Rights Council and World Tourism Organization.

We intend to continue our efforts to further isolate Russia in multilateral fora until it ends its aggression and starts respecting fundamental principles of international order, since the country itself declared compliance with these principles.

We draw attention to the threat to global food security that resulted from Russia's aggression. This was a particularly important issue discussed at the 33rd session of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations' Regional Conference for Europe that was held in Łódź last May. During the session, the decision to condemn Moscow's actions was adopted almost unanimously.

Promotion and defence of the universality, indivisibility, and interdependence of human rights invariably remain an important aspect of our multilateral commitment. Following the end of our three-year membership on the UN Human Rights Council in 2022, we will pursue our active commitment to improving human rights standards, particularly in the context of the 75th anniversary of adopting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that we celebrate this year.

Apart from our involvement in the area of peace and security as well as human rights, the third pillar of the UN's activities, i.e. the promotion of sustainable development, remains of vital importance to us. We will participate in UN efforts to, among other things, prevent crises, implement sustainable development goals, and combat negative effects of climate change, particularly in small island states. We intend to continue our active involvement in discussions and work on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We want to be a reliable, responsible, and active partner in this area. This is evidenced by our efforts to secure membership on the UN Economic and Social Council.

We believe that the United Nations remains the most important platform of international cooperation for sustainable development.

Members of the House,

Over a year ago, before the full-scale armed conflict erupted in Ukraine, Poland assumed the annual Chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. During a ceremony held in Vienna to inaugurate our Chairmanship, I declared that the threat of war in the OSCE area is the biggest since the Second World War, and that the Organization's aim should be to take steps toward building security and confidence measures, making efforts to settle frozen conflicts in the OSCE area.

Under our Chairmanship, the OSCE made attempts to deescalate tensions. The first important initiative that I presented in Vienna on 8 February 2022 was a proposal to launch the so-called Renewed OSCE European Security Dialogue. This was met with approval from our partners and was the subject of talks during my visit to Moscow on 14-15 February.

If efforts to deescalate tensions ultimately proved unsuccessful, it surely was not due to a lack of commitment on our side. It was the Russian side that showed no good will to look for peaceful solutions and dialogue.

As I have already pointed out, today we can assume that as I was holding talks with Minister Lavrov, Russian generals were taking relevant orders,

and it is highly probable that the question of whether war would break out or not was already sealed.

In the face of the biggest conflict in Europe since World War II, Poland assumed the responsibility to defend the OSCE's fundamental principles, its mission, and longstanding achievements. This was an extremely difficult task, due to the fact that most decisions within the OSCE are made by consensus, and that the Organization itself is not adapted to operate in times of war between its members.

However, our determination enabled us to counteract the destructive tactics employed by the Russian Federation. The defence of OSCE principles and maintaining the Organization's functionality became tangible achievements of the Polish Chairmanship. Throughout our tenure we ensured political and moral support for Ukraine while, at the same time exposing the scale of Russia's crimes.

We and like-minded states condemned the aggression, which was met with Russia's consistent and ruthless attacks against our Chairmanship. They were designed to intimidate us and force us to adopt a "neutral course", delegitimise our actions and discredit us in the eyes of our Western allies.

By and large, the OSCE's calendar of mandated events was fully implemented in all three dimensions of the Organization's activities.

Together with like-minded states we launched the so-called Moscow Mechanism three times. This is a procedure that allows the OSCE to investigate violations of international humanitarian law and human rights committed by Russian forces on Ukrainian territory and in Russia itself. In cooperation with the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights we organised the OSCE's Warsaw Human Dimension Conference - an event that replaced the annual Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, which could not take place due to obstruction by the Russian Federation.

Despite our concerns, we managed to ensure the OSCE's operational continuity on the ground, extending mandates of almost all OSCE missions, including in Central Asian countries, the Western Balkans and Moldova.

After Russia blocked the extension of mandates for the OSCE's longest-running field operations, i.e. the Special Monitoring Mission and the Office of the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine, we guaranteed, with moral and most of all financial support from many of the participating states, the Organization's continued presence in Ukraine. On 1 November 2022, a new Support Programme for Ukraine became fully operational, providing assistance to its civilian population affected by the war.

Poland navigated the OSCE through a turbulent year, showing that in some situations one should give up neutrality and misunderstood impartiality. War crimes and violations of all principles governing the coexistence of states call for an unambiguous and strong response.

The OSCE Ministerial Council held on 1-2 December 2022 in Łódź showed the unity of like-minded states and their unambiguous approval of Poland's approach that consists of supporting Ukraine to stand up for the Organization's principles and fundamental values.

The year of our OSCE Chairmanship was a test for Polish diplomacy, of our ability to use multilateral diplomatic tools not only to enhance our own image and pursue our national interests, but most of all to oppose existential threats to the security and stability of our region and of the Euro-Atlantic area.

The defence of OSCE principles and maintaining the Organization's functionality became tangible achievements of the Polish Chairmanship. They also constitute a standard of behaviour that we established - a vital point of reference that future OSCE Chairs could use in situations when international law is blatantly violated

Madam Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House,

Pursuing Poland's foreign policy based on the principles outlined to this House, defining its vital directions, achieving its objectives – in an international environment that is currently changing – requires a general reflection.

For any policy, including a foreign one, the issue of timing is of fundamental importance. Political environments evolve and change over time, thus conditioning the success of our efforts towards desired objectives.

Therefore, it is only when we identify the right time to achieve given goals that we are able to mobilise the means, showing determination in our actions so that these efforts bring about desirable results.

This is because using the same means and showing the same determination can enable us to accomplish our objectives – or it might mean that our potential was wasted.

Moreover, this assumption must be accepted together with the observation that in our part of Europe nations usually must wait for favourable political circumstances to reach their objectives much longer than bigger and more powerful ones.

This means that they should be particularly sensitive to the time when political environments are changing, standing ready to duly mobilise available means, and show exceptional resolve to achieve desired objectives. In other words, they should pursue an ambitious policy when there is demand for one. Russia's aggression against Ukraine will change Europe's political environment. Therefore, we must strive to improve Poland's status in Europe through its position, security, and conditions for its development. It will be achieved through Poland's increased political and military potential resulting from a dismissal of the threat of Russian imperialism spilling over Europe and, we hope, from Ukraine winning its defence war.

For Poland and for countries in our part of Europe, the present international crisis, linked to further threats to European peace and potentially dangerous for Poland's security, must, therefore, be the time for a particularly ambitious policy – one that in Marshal Józef Piłsudski's day was called bidding up the Polish cause.

Only this kind of policy, let me repeat once more, can enable us to turn Poland and the entire region's current strong position into the status of a necessary keystone for security and stability while uniting the transatlantic community; thereby considerably improving the chances for our globe to survive and continue thriving in peace.