

**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND**

**Andrzej Duda**

WARSAW, 21 SEPTEMBER 2019

*Participants of the ceremony marking the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the HQ Multinational Corps North-East!*

*Distinguished General!*

*Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen – Officers, Soldiers of the Corps!*

*Ladies and Gentlemen!*

Twenty years ago, when the Corps was being established, as a trilateral Danish-German-Polish project, nobody expected that this first and only Allied entity of this scale, deployed in the states of the former Eastern block, would be entrusted with so hugely responsible tasks and that it would confront the challenges of the changing security conditions in this part of Europe. Therefore, I feel particular satisfaction looking at the involvement of a dozen or so countries which currently co-create the Corps, and which are gradually increasing the size of their personnel posted to it. I also appreciate and thank new nations who are taking decisions to join in.

Our joint presence in Szczecin is a testimony to the successful military co-operation in the Polish-Danish-German triangle, which we have pursued for a number of years now. I am glad that we were all able to see the practical implementation process of the decisions taken at the Warsaw Summit of the North Atlantic Alliance, which confirmed the decision to significantly strengthen the Corps` position and to prepare it for the future command of NATO-led operations in the Eastern flank in case of a possible conflict in our region.

Thanks to the commitment and professionalism of the commanders, the staff, soldiers and workers of the Corps it was possible to swiftly implement the agenda indispensable to prepare the structure for achieving full operational readiness in the realm of new tasks entrusted to it in 2018. Upgrading the Corps from a Low Readiness Forces HQ to the High Readiness Forces group of HQs turned it into a key Headquarters responsible for NATO activities, especially in the Suwałki Gap region.

Here, at the Multinational Corps North-East, the allied solidarity and the conviction that security is indivisible, which we so resolutely strived to achieve and which we deeply appreciate, form the basis of the daily service and work. This fact fills me with great pride and I commend it. Rest assured that Poland will further participate in NATO`s initiatives by contributing to actions aimed at strengthening global security.

It is our duty, as Allies, to care for keeping NATO in the best possible shape – both in terms of its defense capabilities as well as its political unity. The readiness of the Armed Forces to react rapidly in case of a threat is being enhanced. We are developing a programme of trainings and exercises, the adaptation of the Allied Command and Control structure is ongoing – including in the Eastern flank, where the key role is played by the Headquarters of the Szczecin Corps and of the Elbląg Division.

The North Atlantic Alliance should continue to be the main, the most powerful and the unquestioned pillar of the global security. I am grateful for your co-operation and support to date, which we can always count on.

On such a ceremonial day, I wish to extend to you my appreciation for your so-far achievements and all your accomplishments. Thank you for your dedication, your competences, your professionalism. I wish you every success in your professional and private lives. I congratulate everyone on this jubilee and I believe that we will celebrate future anniversaries in a world in which the North Atlantic Alliance will continue to be the main, the most powerful and the unquestioned pillar of international security.

I offer my respect and heartfelt gratitude to the Commander, General Sławomir Wojciechowski, His Deputies, the entire staff, soldiers and the civilian workers of the Corps.