



## Toespraak

*datum* 30 oktober 2019

### **Openingswoorden van de Voorzitter van de Eerste Kamer, Jan Anthonie Bruijn, ter gelegenheid van de ontvangst van de President van Polen, Andrzej Duda, op 30 oktober 2019.**

Your Excellency,

On behalf of the States General of the Kingdom of The Netherlands, I am honoured to welcome you in the Dutch Senate. It is a great privilege for us to receive you here today.

I assume you must feel at home in this parliamentary environment, since you were a member of parliament yourself before you were elected as President of the Republic of Poland in 2015.

Your Excellency,

Our two countries share a long and rich history, dating back to the medieval age. During the 17<sup>th</sup> century our economic relationship flourished due to extensive trade between the then Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Dutch Republic, two of the most powerful, tolerant and free European states of their age. The Polish Commonwealth established the first European national constitution in 1791, in which democratic values, rule of law and religious tolerance were guaranteed.

The Plenary Hall of the Dutch Senate, which was build in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, reminds us of the long-standing relationship between our two countries every day: the ceiling of the Plenary Hall depicts eight of our most important trading partners of that time; one of them are the Polish. We will have time to pay a short visit to the Plenary Hall after this meeting to see the Polish trading partners painted on the ceiling.

Another symbol of our shared history lies in the celebration this year and next year of 75 years of freedom in the Netherlands, during which we celebrate the end of the second world war and the liberation of the Netherlands in 1944 and 1945. We shall never forget that Polish soldiers played a very important role in this. Yesterday, you visited Breda, the city that was liberated by the Polish 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Division on October 29 1944, to attend the celebration of this memorable and important event in our national history.

Your Excellency,



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Also today, our countries work together on many areas. We are good partners in the European Union and NATO, and also on the field of economy and trade our ties remain very strong. Since we only have a short amount of time, I would like to give you the floor, after which we can start a short exchange of views on any matter of mutual interest.

Your Excellency,

It is a great honour to welcome you here. Thank you.