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**The European energy security treaty:
let us respond together to energy threats**

During past few weeks the European governments faced a necessity to fulfill one of their most basic function as public authorities, namely to secure natural gas supplies to their national markets. Not only the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, but also those from the Mediterranean basin like Italy, were forced to limit more and more severely natural gas consumption by their industries. Let us put it straight: political ambitions, terrorism or even climatic conditions create now an atmosphere of real threat to the energy security for majority of the European Union Member States as well as some outside of it.

Most recently the crisis was provoked by limits on natural gas supplied from the Russian Federation and the Central Asian countries via pipelines through the territory of Ukraine. Before that, in the first case the reason was that our Ukrainian neighbour did not agree to the methods of conducting commercial negotiations and a drastic price hike in the middle of winter. As it warned before, on 1 January Gazprom diminished the amount of the natural gas transmitted to the EU Member States. The pressure in the gas pipelines they are supplied by dropped in Poland, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Austria, Germany, Italy and even France, Bulgaria and Romania. In other words, a dispute between third countries touched upon a number of the European Union members. Lately, probably because of climate reasons the amounts of natural gas sent to our countries was limited again.

This kind of behaviour towards Poland and other EU countries is also a tangible proof of a institutional weakness of the European structures in the area of energy security. Since over one third of EU Member States found themselves in a difficult or very difficult position, their citizens expected effective action also from the European Union. As for now, the EU has not been able to respond adequately to the seriousness of the situation because it lacks necessary treaty provisions. This is true regardless of individual EU countries reactions.

My government has undertaken decisive steps in order to guarantee for Poland energy supplies in such a way as they would satisfy modern requirements of secure supplies. I

appointed the government's plenipotentiary for diversification of oil and natural gas supplies who takes care about future solutions in this area and that they would guarantee energy supplies for Poland both from internal and external sources. The latter of those should be diversified, stable in operation and their availability fully guaranteed. It has to be underlined at this point, that the security of supplies is a fundamental matter: a cut to energy supplies leads to economic disequilibrium and brings losses. We have to protect our families and industries against such a scenario. At the same time, we are fully aware that security comes at a price and that it brings its own value.

We cannot remain defenseless nor left alone facing a threatening situation. Long term strategic interests of the EU Member States ask for a new initiative. In Europe, there is a widespread feeling that the EU countries should act in solidarity: after all it is an organism of a deeper economic cooperation, while in the area of external economic relations it is even very deep integration. Yet, the field of energy security is not within the scope of the EU competencies. It is a paradox. In 1950 it was precisely in then strategically important sector of coal energy that the great career of the European integration process had begun and resulted in creation of the European Coal and Steel Community. Few years later a civilian use of nuclear energy was considered as important for the future and – in parallel to the European Economic Community – the European Atomic Energy Community Euratom was created. The problems of energy were thus at the very bottom of the European integration process. We should remember this heritage.

Today, however, we lack institutional and treaty provisions that would guarantee all Member States their energy security in a case of crisis. The European Union seems powerless. A new solution that would guarantee mutual assistance for the participating countries in such cases seems optimal. Only this kind of commitment could sustain a great effort leading to creation of a framework and tools allowing for common action.

Up to now the European Union activity at the edge of energy security problem, for example the security of natural gas supplies, are done by the European Community through its directives 2003/55 and 2004/67 that are of market related character and serve mainly to achieve a single market for natural gas in the EU. This kind of market would be more secure then separated markets of the Member States thanks to interconnection of their transmission systems into a single organism. Yet, a difficulty there appears in bridging solutions aiming at

liberalisation of the market, what the European Commission rightly promotes, with a necessity of effective provision of energy security that rests upon the governments of our countries. The latter means, among others, that we have to effectively diversify our sources of supply of energy not only at the EU level as a whole, but also for each Member State as such.

It is right time, in my view, to suggest to our friends a common effort in order to face not only current, but also future challenges. That is why, I would like to propose to our partners, the Member States of the European Union or the NATO, a treaty on energy security. First and foremost, it would be an expression of solidarity of its parties linking them in face of a energy threat provoked either by a cut or a limitation of sources of supply that may occur because of always possible natural disasters, perturbations of wide distributive and supply systems, or political decisions of suppliers.

The energy security treaty could follow formulas contained in the Washington treaty, that allowed for effective transatlantic cooperation, or provisions of the modified Brussels treaty that created the Western European Union. It is necessary that the European energy security treaty could become a real tool that would give us all a certainty and provide security in crisis situations. That is why it is essential that the treaty contains a clearly and firmly stated guarantee clause based on the musketeer principle: "all for one - one for all".

It would be useful to consider creation of a mechanism that could safeguard fulfillment of commitments of participating parties as well as oversee realisation of steps preparing it, namely investments in storage and transmission infrastructure, or a crisis management system. We are going to present an initiative that follows these ideas.

In the current situation, it becomes necessary to provide energy security for all countries that belong to the Euro-Atlantic community. Our actions can only succeed if backed-up by a common political commitment on the governments' level. It looks quite clear from energy market analysis that Europe will be permanently dependent on supplies from outside. I am convinced that the latest unprecedented shortages and limitations of natural gas supplies to our countries that happened during one of the harshest winters of recent years, created a sufficient predicament for a bold and firm action. An energy security treaty would give us ways and means to provide stability and security that we all wish so much.