

## *Poland as key security provider for NATO Eastern Flank*

Keynote speech by Marek Świerczyński at ICES conference in Rzeszów, 24th June 2026

### Abstract

In the wake of Russian full-scale invasion on Ukraine in early 2022, based on the existing planning process, enhanced by the decisions taken in the following months, Poland has begun the largest military expansion and modernization in today's Europe. Arguably, this is a moment in history only to be compared with the last-ditch efforts from the years shortly preceding the German aggression in 1939, and given the capabilities acquired - has no precedent. What is even more remarkable, is that the strengthening of Poland's armed forces is combined with a profound change in the country's strategic vision and altering of its defense doctrine, even if those are not revealed in official strategic documents. From security consumer, reliant on its allies and partners, Poland is quickly moving towards becoming a security provider for its close and further neighbors, declaring itself a regional power - based not only on its military potential, but the largest economy in Central and Eastern Europe, still solid demographics - despite negative trends, crucial location and wide-reaching interests, spanning from Ukraine to Scandinavia, from the Black Sea to the High North, linking the Far East to the U.S. In my presentation, I will focus on what is my day-to-day job, which is depicting and analyzing Poland's security in many aspects - in time of transformation from aspiring minor partner of Western powers to a key European player.