



*MP Arif Virani's statement on the occasion of the National Day of Poland
226th Anniversary of the Constitution of May 3rd, 1791*

May 3rd 2017

Dzień dobry! As the Member of Parliament for Parkdale-High Park and a constitutional lawyer, I am delighted to extend my sincere greetings to Polonia on Polish Constitution Day.

On the third of May in 1791, Poland adopted Europe's first-ever codified and democratic constitution, the first document of its type in modern Europe. The Polish Constitution of 1791 is also recognized as the world's second-oldest codified national constitution and one of the most important achievements in Polish history.

The Constitution, ratified by the Sejm in 1791 as a government act regulating the legal system of Poland, was a milestone in the history of law and the rise of democracy. A very progressive document for its time, it sought to implement a more democratic constitutional monarchy.

Over the next 123 years, the Constitution of 1791, was perceived as proof of successful internal reform and as a symbol of the eventual restoration of Poland's independence. Ultimately, the May 3rd Constitution inspired the Polish nation for generations, helping to preserve and give effect to the aspirations of Poles for a fair and sovereign society.

Today, the 226th anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution is a time for celebration of this Polish achievement. May 3rd is a national statutory and public holiday in Poland, previously outlawed by Nazi occupiers during World War II and subsequently, until 1989, by communist authorities.

On this very historic anniversary, please accept my best wishes for a very happy Polish Constitution Day! Dziękuję bardzo.

Arif Virani

Member of Parliament, Parkdale--High Park

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage (Multiculturalism)