



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

May 3, 2018

**STATEMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY AND MEMBER OF
PARLIAMENT ARIF VIRANI ON THE OCCASION OF THE
MAY 3rd CONSTITUTION DAY.**

Dzień dobry. As the Member of Parliament for Parkdale-High Park, the Vice Chair of the Canada-Poland Parliamentary Friendship Group and a constitutional lawyer, it is an honour to extend my greetings on Poland's May 3 Constitution Day.

Today is a very special day for Poles and Polonia around the world, a time to commemorate the 227th anniversary of the establishment of Europe's first constitution, adopted on May 3, 1791.

Ratified by the Great Sejm, only four years after the American constitution, this document became the world's second-oldest codified national constitution and the first document of its type in modern Europe.

The Polish Constitution introduced the separation of powers in Europe and established a new hereditary monarchy with a strong Parliament. The May 3rd Constitution, a very progressive document for its time, served to inspire the Polish nation for generations. It became a powerful symbol that unified Poles under the 123 year-long partition and played a centralizing role in all Polish activities throughout the 19th century. To this day, it remains a source of tremendous pride for Poles and is recognized as one of the most significant achievements in the history of Poland.

It is particularly noteworthy that under the communist regime in Poland, all forms of public celebration on the 3rd of May were forbidden. May 3rd was again declared a national holiday following the collapse of communism and the transition to democracy in 1989.

Please accept my congratulations and best wishes as you celebrate Poland's national day and the landmark Constitution of May 3, 1791. Dziękuję.

Arif Virani, Member of Parliament, Parkdale-High Park
Parliamentary Secretary for Multiculturalism
Vice Chair, Canada-Poland Parliamentary Friendship Group

