

Minister Kenney issues statement on Polish Constitution Day

May 3, 2013

The Honourable Jason Kenney, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, issued the following statement on the occasion of Poland's Constitution Day:

"I am pleased to join with Canada's Polish community in marking May 3rd Constitution Day. On this day in 1791, Poland adopted Europe's first-ever codified, democratic constitution.

"Sadly, soon after its adoption, Poland fell under foreign occupation by its expansionist neighbours. However, during the 123 years that followed, the Constitution served as a rallying cry for the Polish struggle for freedom and self-determination. It also became an important symbol of resistance during the period of Communist rule, when the Soviet-backed crony government sought to extinguish the Polish national spirit by replacing the celebration of May 3rd Constitution Day with forced processions on May 1st, known as May Day.

"Today, May 3rd is celebrated as a national holiday in Poland. Here in Canada, Polish-Canadians reflect on the long-standing, historic legacy of the fight for liberty and democracy and honour its brave veterans. They also celebrate the fact that Canada reflects those same values and that Poland is now a free and prosperous European democracy.

"I encourage all Canadians to commemorate this important holiday, which marks an important page in the history of modern democracy."