

**SPEAKING NOTES
THE HONOURABLE NOËL A. KINSELLA
SPEAKER OF THE SENATE**

**ON THE OCCASION OF A RECEPTION HOSTED BY THE
CANADIAN AMBASSADOR TO HUNGARY, BOSNIA AND
HERZEGOVINA, AND SLOVENIA**

**BUDAPEST, HUNGARY
14 OCTOBER 2014**

Your Excellency Ambassador Helfand,
Honourable parliamentarians,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a great pleasure to be with you here today. Budapest is an extraordinary city, steeped in culture and history, yet always at the forefront of major political and social developments of the times. This city holds a special place in my heart, in part because it provides a unique feeling with one foot in the past and one in the future.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend a personal word of thanks to our host, Ambassador Helfand. Your Excellency, though your responsibilities are enormous, you have served Canada most admirably. The countries under your purview include Hungary, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovenia. All have been working to develop democratic political institutions and free market economies.

Steady progress continues to be made on all fronts in Hungary. When it comes to major change in political and social matters it is always best, in the words of Canada's first Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald, to hasten slowly, never to run ahead of what one is capable.

Ambassador, your background and current experience seem to be especially well-suited to helping Canadian parliamentarians in our understanding of the complex issues of Central European politics and development. Equally, you are able to explain Canadian policies and concerns to our Central European friends.

You are a lawyer by training and have held several senior positions with the Department of Foreign Affairs International Trade and Development (DFATD). Notably, you served as Deputy Director with the Southern Europe Division, Deputy Director and then Director with the Defence and Security Relations Division and graduated from the Senior Course at the NATO Defence College. In addition, you were Second Secretary in London, First Secretary and Consul in Belgrade, Deputy Head of Mission in Tel Aviv and Director of the Peace Operations and Fragile States Policy Division at DFATD before assuming your responsibilities as Ambassador here in Budapest. Canadians are fortunate to have someone with your remarkable level of experience at the helm of Canada-Hungary relations during this pivotal time in international relations.

Despite the physical distance between our countries, Canada and Hungary have much in common. For example, we share a commitment to multilateralism and the rule of law, making us natural partners in the promotion of international stability and the furthering of human rights.

These goals are helped by our joint membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Canada provided strong support for Hungary's NATO membership, and we were the first Alliance member to ratify Hungarian accession in 1999.

Canada was grateful for Hungary's participation in the mission in Afghanistan, and was pleased to support Hungarian development projects in northern Afghanistan. Our nations both made great sacrifices and we will not soon forget the bravery and heroism of those who fought for freedom and security in Afghanistan. Together we have clearly demonstrated our commitment to the values represented by NATO, promoting stability where it is threatened, and advancing collective security.

While we enjoy a strong partnership as allies on the international stage, there are many opportunities not yet seized. This is one reason that opportunities to share ideas and network are so important. Whether as parliamentarians, officials, representatives of the private sector, the arts, or academia, the conversations we hold may help to create or recognize opportunities.

Our commercial ties are another important facet of our relationship ripe for expansion. Two-way trade between our countries totalled almost \$600 million in 2013, and a number of Canadian investors are present in Hungary. In fact, cumulative Canadian direct investment in Hungary was valued at \$13.7 billion at the end of 2012, making Hungary the 9th largest worldwide destination for these funds.

While our economic partnership is on a solid footing, opportunities for deepening our commercial relations abound as Canada looks to increase our economic activities across Europe. The Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between Canada and the European Union opens avenues for even greater cooperation among our countries by seeking to create jobs for the mutual benefit of European and Canadian citizens. Our multi-faceted relationship is certain to continue to grow stronger.

Let me close by once again thanking Ambassador Helfand for hosting our delegation here tonight, and a special thanks also to the Embassy staff who helped make it possible. Please raise your glass and join me in a toast to the strength of the Canadian-Hungarian relationship and to the exciting opportunities that lie ahead.

Egészségedre!