

## **SPEAKING NOTES**

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

**ON THE OCCASION OF A LUNCHEON FOR  
A PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION FROM POLAND**

**OTTAWA  
MAY 5, 2010**

Your Excellency Bogdan Borusewicz,  
Honourable Senators and Members of Parliament,  
Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and Gentleman:

### **Dzień dobry**

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Senate and to these historic rooms for this luncheon in honour of the parliamentary delegation from Poland. This is a relatively informal gathering, giving you an opportunity to reflect on your visit to Canada thus far in a relaxed and congenial atmosphere.

Earlier in the day many of you visited the Canadian War Museum. It is in reviewing our military past that we are reminded of the importance of our armed forces and their present commitments abroad. Since being the first North-Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) country to ratify Polish accession to the North Atlantic Alliance in February 1998, Canada has become a leader among NATO countries in language and peacekeeping training in Poland. Our countries are currently cooperating closely through NATO's International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. While the recent tragic loss of so many of your country's leaders, including top military commanders, in the plane crash at Smolensk has

cast uncertainty over some future operations of the Polish army, Poland has Canada's continuing support during this trying time.

The close relations between Canada and Poland are not limited to military cooperation. Our countries also enjoy significant bilateral trade valued at nearly \$990 million in 2009. Poland is Canada's largest merchandise trading partner in Central and Eastern Europe. Canadian companies also find Poland an attractive investment destination, thanks to its EU membership and resilience in the face of the recent global economic slowdown. Major Canadian investors in Poland include such companies as Pratt & Whitney Canada and Bombardier Transportation, bringing Canada's cumulative direct investment in Poland to \$295 million in 2008.

Cooperation between Canada and Poland is likely to grow even stronger in the future. Since 2008, Poles have been able to travel to Canada visa-free with their e-passports, further expanding the ties among our citizens. Another two important agreements between Canada and Poland came into force in 2009: a Social Security Agreement allowing the portability of pensions between our countries; and a Youth Mobility Agreement that will allow youth to work and study up to one year in our respective countries. As well, Canada and the EU are currently negotiating a comprehensive economic partnership, which should provide additional incentives for closer commercial relations between our countries.

It is important to note that the strong ties between Poland and Canada are not a recent development. Later today you will be travelling to Winnipeg, a city rich with Polish-Canadian history and culture. The influence of Poland in Winnipeg dates back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the first Polish church in Winnipeg, named the Holy Ghost, being built in 1898. From the early 1900s to 1944, Winnipeg was called the "Polish capital" by many immigrants as it was the hub of Polish

organizational life and home to the largest Polish community in Canada. To this day, Winnipeg is home to that same vibrant community, which I hope you will have the time to experience during your visit to the city.

In closing, I would like to raise a toast to our visitors from Poland and wish them a pleasant journey to Winnipeg. Na zdrowie (to your health)!