

Flag raising ceremony

December 1, 2011, Toronto

*The Parliament of Ontario*

(Speech delivered by Dr. Valentin Naumescu,

Consul general of Romania)

**Honourable members of the Legislative Assembly,**

**Very reverend fathers,**

**Dear colleagues and co-nationals,**

**Every year, rain or shine, the National Day of Romania brings us the touching opportunity for symbolic ceremonies as well as for brief reflections on our history and identity. Far away from the native country, we are generously hosted on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December by the Parliament of Ontario to celebrate the Day of the Great Union of 1918. In fact, that was the moment when the long dreamed project of a Romanian united nation-state, initiated with the first unification of 1859 was finally fulfilled.**

**In the aftermath of the World War I, immediately after the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy, the successor of the Habsburg Empire in Central Europe, the Romanian representatives gathered at Alba Iulia decided the unification of the province of Transylvania with the Kingdom of Romania. A historical truth of national unity throughout the three Romanian provinces**

was thus reclaimed, giving birth to what was sometimes called “*the Greater Romania*”.

93 years later, a completely changed world finds Romania as a member state of the European Union and also as a steady ally of Canada within NATO. In a historical self-evident continuity, the Romanian national project reaffirms in fact the same set of fundamental values, ideals and aspirations for a safe and decent life. These values are now made possible by the contemporary system of institutions that was built in the postwar era within the Western economic, military and political order.

Dear friends,

Today we proudly see the Romanian flag in front of the prestigious Parliament of Ontario. This might be a clear and powerful message coming from two democracies working together in multiple partnerships, international organizations and alliances but also the identity message of more than 100,000 Romanians who found their destiny in the generous and lovely province of Ontario. For them and for this warm friendship the Romanian flag is raised and will be fluttering today in Queen’s Park.

Concluding my message, I would like to express the deepest gratitude to the distinguished (current and former) MPPs who joined us today for this honouring ceremony. Thank you Canada, thank you Ontario!

**La multi ani, Romania!**