

The National Day of Romania

December 1st, 2011

Toronto, The National Club

(Speech delivered by Dr. Valentin Naumescu,

Consul general of Romania)

Honourable members of the Parliament of Ontario,

Consuls general,

Very reverend fathers,

Distinguished guests,

It is with the most thrilling pleasure and deepest honour to welcome you at the National Day of Romania. In my current diplomatic position, I've had so far four times the very challenging but highly rewarding opportunity to address the audience on the 1st of December. For me and for the whole team of the Consulate General of Romania in Toronto this is indeed that special night of the year when we proudly see around the national flag the closest friends and partners, distinguished politicians and consuls general, co-nationals as well as Canadian officials, academics and businessmen who support in various ways the development of the relations between our countries.

93 years ago, in the aftermath of the Great War, the Romanian delegates summoned at Alba Iulia decided the unification of the historical province of Transylvania with the Kingdom of Romania. On December 1st, 1918, the united Romanian nation-state (named by historians and journalists of that time *the Greater Romania*) was born, based on a clear and massive popular support. In fact, the Great Union reflects a bright moment of our

history that combined in a happy manner the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy, the political inspiration and courage of then-Romanian elites and the national consensus. We can say that, under exceptional circumstances, the Romanian national will met a positive international context and thus made the European powers to admit a historical truth and a self-evident situation. The dream of the national unity throughout the three Romanian provinces began with the first Union of 1859, continued in 1877-1878 with the glorious War of Independence, then consolidated in 1881 with the foundation of the Kingdom of Romania before being completed as a successful national project on December 1st, 1918.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The nowadays world finds Romania as a part of the Western system of economic, military and political institutions. The Atlantic order that shaped the postwar democracy is now including Romania and this is definitely the most effective and precious continuation of our national project. With no exception, the Romanians from the last three generations wanted the Western community to be the depository of our ideals and expectations for a safe and decent life. Despite the fact that 2011 was not the best economic year of the European Union and a complicate debt crisis threatens the historical achievements of the member states, the support for the European foundations remains at very high level in Romania.

Either in diaspora or in their native country, the Romanians throughout the world are the most active, valuable resource to fuel that old dream of our ancestors. It is the reason why I consider that investing in people and education is by far the most intelligent policy for a nation to move forward.

No progress could be imagined without good quality human resources, professional competitiveness and high expertise. I am proud to say that the Romanian community in Ontario has plenty of them. Contrastingly, this is a strong reason for satisfaction and regrets in the same time. As consul general of Romania in the largest city of Canada I had the pleasure of identifying during my term of duty so many talented, successful and competitive co-nationals working in IT, medicine, engineering, business, academia or arts that simply put me between two opposite feelings: the happiness that they are here and have a contribution in developing the prestige of Romania and the Canadian-Romanian relations versus the regrets we have that Romania lost hundreds of thousands of educated and creative people during the communist regime and in the past decades of transition. We accept the history as it is, with the dark and bright sides of our national destiny and we cherish wherever we are our cultural and spiritual identity. Preserving native culture and language is one of the most sensitive issues for all immigrants, in Europe, North America and everywhere else in the world. That's why the Consulate General of Romania in Toronto made its best in the past three years to establish a Romanian lectureship in Canada, actually the very first one. In January this year the Romanian lecturer appointed at York University started the courses of Romanian language and culture at Glendon College and since September the program resumed for the second academic year. According to our knowledge, Romanian became the 15th language to be taught in the Ontarian universities. The program is meant not only for the Romanian origin students of the second generation but also for all the students interested in developing international careers with European connections.

Dear friends,

Concluding my speech, it is my duty of honour to extend to you the warmest wishes for a happy holiday season, for a better economic year to come and for a stronger collaboration between Romania and Canada!

Long live Romania, long live Canada!

La multi ani Romania, la multi ani distinsi compatrioti!

Thank you.