

Institute of National Remembrance

<https://ipn.gov.pl/en/news/11218,On-3rd-of-May-Poland-celebrates-the-Constitution-Day.html>

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On 3rd of May Poland celebrates the Constitution Day



On the 3rd of May each year the Poles celebrate the anniversary of the passing of their 1791 constitution, the first such document of its kind in Europe and only the second in the world.

The Constitution was adopted on 3 May 1791 by the Sejm of the Polish-

Lithuanian Commonwealth. It was the first written fundamental law in Europe and the second one in the world, which became a base for creating the identity of a sovereign nation. It regulated the legal system of the state, introducing constitutional monarchy. On its basis a separation of powers was established. The power was divided among three branches: a legislature, an executive, and a judiciary. Although it was in effect for only 14 months, it constituted an attempt to modernize the Polish administration and to save its sovereignty.

The 3rd of May Holiday was restored in the Second Republic of Poland in 1919. During World War II it was outlawed by the German and Soviet occupants. It was also forbidden to celebrate this holiday in the People's Republic of Poland. The only exception took place in 1981, at the time of the "Solidarity carnival", when the 190th anniversary of the Constitution of 3 May was celebrated legally, although under close scrutiny of the communist secret service. Since 1990, it has become an official national holiday for Poles again.

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