

## **Baltic Community Representatives Meet with Canadian Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage for Multiculturalism, Arif Virani**

**April 19, 2018**

**Toronto** - Community leaders from Canada's three Baltic communities met with the Canadian Member of Parliament for Parkdale-High Park and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage for Multiculturalism, Arif Virani, in Toronto last week.

Baltic Federation in Canada and Latvian National Federation in Canada President, Andris Kesteris, Estonian Central Council in Canada President, Marcus Kolga and Lithuanian Community in Canada leader, Joana Kuras, discussed a wide range of issues with Mr. Virani, including Canadian-Baltic relations, community relations and Baltic community legacy in Canada.

Andris Kesteris thanked Mr. Virani for the Canadian government's commitment and leadership in NATO's Operation Reassurance to help secure NATO's Baltic borders.

The Baltic leaders also discussed improved engagement and communications with the federal government on important issues and support opportunities.



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"We thank the Canadian government for supporting the Memorial to the Victims of Communism," said Andris Kesteris. "Many of our community members and their families arrived in Canada as refugees, fleeing Nazi and Soviet occupation and repression. We are very proud to have been given the opportunity to make important contributions towards helping build the Canada we know today."

The Baltic Federation in Canada represents approximately 200,000 Canadians of Baltic heritage.

"The Baltic communities are an important part of the diverse mosaic of experiences, communities and cultures that binds Canada together," said Joana Kuras, "it is of vital importance, that we maintain ongoing communications with our government to ensure that our views and experiences are also reflected in our national discourse."