

The Act of the Union of Lublin

The act of the Union of Lublin of 1569 is a unique testimony to establishing, in early modern age, by means of negotiations and free agreement, of a unique Commonwealth of two equal states - the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The negotiations over the terms of the Lublin treaty were contentious and driven by geopolitical and military factors. Nevertheless, it established a framework in which mutual hostility was contained; in which civic, republican and democratic values were emphasized; in which multiculturalism and religious tolerance flourished, and in which a powerful political fusion developed, forming a unique but truly European political culture. The state thus established – the Commonwealth of the Two Nations – had ever since a single jointly elected ruler, a shared sejm, defense system, foreign policy and single currency.

This act is the document of the Lithuanian side which has 78 wax seals. Now it is preserved in the Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw, Poland. The Polish side also issued a document with 140 seals which was held in the Radziwiłł family collection until World War II, but it was lost (burnt?) in 1944. In 2017, the act of the Union of Lublin document was inscribed on the UNESCO Memory of the World International Register.

