***The General Sejm of***

***the Republic of Poland,***

***genesis and organization***

*The first democratic activities in Poland can be seen in the times before the existence of Poland. Even then, the rulers met with the knights to make important political decisions. Later on this custom disappeared for a while due to the strengthening of the ruler’s position. It was reborn again in the period of the district breakdown, when the princes were meeting with officials, with the powerful and with their knights.*

*In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries,* ***noble democracy*** *was formed in Poland, giving the wealthy people:*

* *an advantage over those of the lower classes*
* *an influence on the internal and foreign policy of the state.*

*On the basis of progressively granted privileges, the nobility obtained political, judicial-administrative and economic rights. The main privilege introduced the principle of* ***consulting important political decisions of the monarch with nobles****. Thanks to it, the nobility gained a real influence on the state policy.*

*In time, such meetings came to be referred to as sejmiks (local parliaments). From 1454, they obteined legislative functions. From 1493, the practice of joint meetings of assemblies representatives with the king and a group of nobles (magnates) developed, establishing the Polish bicameral* ***General Sejm****, consisting of*

* *the King*
* *the Chamber of Deputies - a deputy in the Polish nobility was considered a representative of the province or land from which he was elected*
* *the Senate - with magnates, the highest dignitaries of the Roman Catholic Church and the most important state officials.*

*Initially, the General Sejm was convened by the king at any time and when needed. The purpose of the meeting was also set by him. From 1573 the Sejm was convened once every two years for 6 weeks. For special needs, the king called an extraordinary Sejm. At that time, the king still had the opportunity to make final amendments, because it was on his behalf that the constitution was announced. In the 16th century, the General Sejm became an organ that had a decisive influence on the situation in the state.*