

OTTAWA POLICY SYMPOSIUM FOCUSES ON UKRAINE

complied with the same. To assist them with their additional responsibilities, each sector coordinator underwent a series of trainings in Canada hosted by their respective sector agency. This served to increase the professional skills of the local staff and significantly contributed to the growth of a western work culture in the CUP office.

In addition to its primary function of providing support to the CUP program, the CUP office continued to support many of Canada's TA initiatives by serving as a public outpost for disseminating such information to the Ukrainian public. With its prime location in a highly visible public centre, the CUP office has effectively profiled Canada's TA image in Kyiv while also serving as a convenient resource centre for Canadian volunteers seeking information and assistance while working in Ukraine.

It has often been said that the CUP office is much more than the sum of its constituent programs. First and foremost it is a group of dedicated people, Canadian and Ukrainian alike, who are contributing to the timely cause of economic reforms and the transition of Ukraine to a democratic society. And secondly, it is a little bit of Canada far away from home, with a friendly welcome and a helping hand to the many Canadians who have the privilege of serving Canada and assisting Ukraine in this important journey.

Canadian foreign policy makers were treated to a unique perspective on events in Ukraine last November at the National Press Club in Ottawa. Three highly respected Canadians presented a candid and unique analysis of reforms in Ukraine based on their experience from working and living in Ukraine since independence.

Each speaker addressed one of Canada's foreign policy priorities in Ukraine. Lubomyr Markevych, Director of the Canada Ukraine Partners Office (CUP office), spoke candidly on the progress and problems in the transition to a market economy. Bohdan Krawchenko, Pro-Rector of the Ukrainian Academy of Public Administration, addressed the challenges Ukraine faces in reforming its civil service. Gerald Fedchun, Director of the Canada-Ukraine Chamber of Commerce, spoke on establishing and maintaining Canadian investment links with Ukraine.

The symposium was opened by David Kilgour, Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons. The audience of forty invited guests included Senator Marcel Prud'homme, representatives of Canadian Executing Agencies, academics, members of the Ukrainian community, DFAIT officers and a majority of the CIDA project staff working on

the Ukraine Program. Members of Parliament Jesse Flis, Walt Lastewka, Bill Blaikie, and David Kilgour attended a pre-symposium briefing.

Markevych has been CUP office Director since its inception in 1993. He stressed that Canadian technical assistance projects need to maintain contact with Ukrainians who come to Canada on study tours, because many become disillusioned upon returning to Ukraine. Canada also must be able to react quickly to work with Ukrainian ministries led by reform-minded ministers, such as Justice, Health and Environment.

He pointed to the success of September's smooth and peaceful monetary reform but pointed to tax reform as an urgent priority. Also, he expressed hope that the Civil Code proposed by parliament will not be watered down too much before being passed.

Dr. Krawchenko founded the Ukrainian Academy of Public Administration and co-authored Ukraine's civil code. He explained that the "easy foundation tasks" of building the institutions of a democratic state and establishing macro-economic stability are now completed, while more difficult tasks loom on the horizon.

Reforming public finance - from taxation and budgeting to the re-casting of social expenditures - remains the major priority of the state. Secondly, the government needs to be re-organized so that responsibilities are outlined more clearly and duplication between various government ministries, departments, agencies is removed. Furthermore, public management policies and practices need to be simplified to the benefit of citizenry, especially in the area of local government. Dr. Krawchenko remained optimistic about the coming changes.

Mr. Fedchun has participated in all of Canada's trade missions to Ukraine, including the most recent one in October 1996. He spoke of Canada's competitive advantage with Ukraine. But to ease business links, he urged a reform of the civil service and a need to restructure business management practices. Civil servants, he said, did not respect the rule of law and were often "tack throwers on the road" to setting up successful businesses. Nonetheless, the climate is good for Canadian investment. "Business is about taking risks and then making a profit...Ukraine is good for making a profit," he said.

The symposium was sponsored by the Canadian Bureau for International Education with the support of the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development. Proceedings will be summarized in a policy paper in the new year.

CANADA-UKRAINE PARTNERS PROGRAM
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