

Let me first express my thanks to you for the invitation to address this Thirteenth Ukrainian Canadian Congress. I particularly want to extend my congratulations to the Ukrainian Canadian Committee on the occasion of its fortieth anniversary -- a longevity which demonstrates the vitality of the Ukrainian community in this country, as does the presence here tonight of delegates representing 28 national member organizations as well as 25 branches of the Committee from seven provinces.

Tonight I want to review with you a number of issues related to the forthcoming meeting in Madrid on the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and in particular on the question of Human Rights. These are matters in which I have had an abiding interest for some years and for which I have a particular responsibility in my present cabinet portfolio. I realize, also, that they are matters in which many of you are vitally interested for many reasons. As evidence of this, you have made your views known through numerous briefs and a major submission from the Ukrainian Canadian Committee to the parliamentary sub-committee which is presently conducting hearings in preparation for our participation at Madrid. We are confident that these submissions will assist the sub-committee in the report it will present to Parliament which will provide essential input for the government in formulating Canadian government policy on its approach to Madrid.

I can well understand why Canadians of Ukrainian origin have a strong interest in what happens in negotiations to promote détente in Europe. As this anniversary evening indicates, you have long been a part of the multicultural fabric of Canada and have made a remarkable contribution to the building of our country. You have helped to develop the institutions in Canada that give to individuals here a freedom of mobility and expression which is matched in few countries of the world. In this, you have helped to project internationally the values which ensure the dignity of the individual in Canada.

At the same time, many of you understandably have strong emotional ties with your homeland in Europe. Some of you have family members still in the Ukraine, or in other parts of Eastern Europe, whose circumstances may give rise to personal grief and anguish. Regrettably, this heritage is shared with many citizens of Canada who have come as immigrants from other Eastern European countries. You have, therefore, a special interest in the state of affairs in your European homelands as well as in East-West relations and the reality or unreality of détente in Europe.