

## Backgrounder

### CANADA-ESTONIA RELATIONS

#### Canada's Relations with Estonia

- Canada never recognized the annexation of Estonia by the USSR and, in August 1991, was one of the first Western countries to reestablish relations.
- Canada has repeatedly called for the early, orderly, and complete withdrawal of Russian troops from Estonia and its Baltic neighbours. Canada has also underlined this support in meetings with Russian officials. Canada expects Russia to abide by its commitment to withdraw the last of its troops by August 31, 1994.
- Roughly one third of Estonia's population is Russian-speaking. Observers from the United Nations, the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), and the Council of Europe agree that Estonia is not abusing the rights of its minorities. Nonetheless, poor relations between the two communities are of concern to the international community. The CSCE currently has a long-term "preventive diplomacy" mission on the ground whose purpose is to promote better relations and help build a civic society in Estonia. Canada has participated in this mission.
- There are 21 350 Canadians of Estonian origin in Canada. Canada's Estonian community, concentrated in Toronto, is the largest in the world outside Estonia.

#### Trade

- Bilateral trade totalled just over \$15 million in 1993.
- Canada has granted General Preferential Tariff (GPT) treatment to products imported from Estonia, allowing better access to the Canadian market.
- Canada and Estonia have negotiated an Agreement on Trade and Commerce. It establishes a framework of balanced rights and obligations, as well as agreed rules for the conduct of trade and commercial relations between the two countries. Under the agreement, each country accords most-favoured-nation status to the other.