



## CANADA - UKRAINE BILATERAL RELATIONS

### Overview

In December 1991, Canada was the first Western country to recognize Ukraine's independence following the break-up of the Soviet Union. In October 1992, Canada's Governor General, Ramon Hnatyshyn, was the first Head of State to visit the newly independent country.

More than one million Canadians claim Ukrainian ancestry. This forms a basis of the special relationship that has developed between Canada and Ukraine in the political, social, cultural, scientific and economic fields.

Canada has consistently supported Ukraine's integration into the international community in discussions with the Group of Seven leading industrialized countries (G-7), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).

At the NATO Summit in Brussels in January 1994, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien urged Canada's partners to focus on Ukraine's strategic importance. At this spring's meeting of the EBRD, the Canadian delegation pushed the Bank to be more active in Ukraine. Canada particularly noted the urgent need to support small business.

In March, Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet visited Ukraine to show Canada's strong political support at the time of its crucial first multi-party elections since independence. During his visit, Mr. Ouellet signed the Declaration of Special Partnership between Canada and Ukraine. He also announced an \$11.5-million assistance package. One project is helping the rehabilitation of the Dnipro River. A second provides training to Ukrainian physicians, while a third allows provision of emergency medical supplies, including vaccines. Mr. Ouellet also announced a \$15-million package of Canadian assistance to support nuclear dismantlement and enhanced nuclear safety.

### G-7 Decisions

At the Naples Economic Summit last summer, Canada succeeded in having Ukraine's problems highlighted in discussions amongst the G-7 leaders. As a result, two significant initiatives concerning Ukraine were adopted. One provided for the establishment of a new \$200-million fund to assist Ukraine in ensuring the safety of its nuclear reactors. Canada volunteered to contribute up to \$24 million to the multi-year program. This amounts to about 12 per cent of the total, three times higher than Canada would normally provide for such an effort. It reflects the Canadian government's commitment to nuclear safety and its recognition that this is a vital issue for the health of Ukrainians and for the economic growth of their country.

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