

## Recommendations

1. Canadian governmental and non-governmental organizations have been involved in a variety of assistance programmes in Ukraine. However, in spite of its great importance to Ukraine, and its geopolitical importance in the Black Sea Basin, Crimea has generally been neglected by these organizations. Similar organizations in other countries and a number of international organizations have devoted considerable attention to monitoring the situation in Crimea, but relatively little funding has been available for projects aimed at improving the living conditions of Crimea's population, and promoting improved inter-group relations in this troubled peninsula. In short, Crimea has received a disproportionately large amount of media attention, but a disproportionately small share of Western assistance. Given the difficult socio-economic situation in Crimea, and its status as a potential regional "hot spot," this region deserves more attention than it has received to date. Thus it is strongly recommended that greater efforts be made to ensure that Canadian assistance projects directed at Ukraine include Crimea as a potential "target area."

Those providing assistance to Crimea must be aware of the specific circumstances in this region of Ukraine. For example, care should be taken to ensure that such projects address the distinctive needs of minority communities such as the Crimean Tatars, and in some cases separate projects directed at particular communities should be considered. However, it is also important to keep in mind certain nuances of the local political situation. For example, too much emphasis on Crimea's distinctiveness strengthens the position of ambitious Crimean politicians who oppose almost any attempts by Kyiv to restrict their autonomy. Thus those providing assistance to Crimea should be aware that they are operating within the broader framework of a Ukrainian state which is involved in a complex tug-of-war with Crimea over their respective areas of jurisdiction.

2. The deportees and their descendants who have returned to Crimea have found it very difficult to gain Ukrainian citizenship. This has deprived them of many services and benefits available to citizens of Ukraine, and has greatly hampered their integration into Ukrainian society. Thus many representatives of the returnee population stress the importance of accelerating the naturalisation of the returnee population. The Ukrainian government has recently taken some steps to simplify naturalisation procedures, but could do more to facilitate this process. Naturalisation is also hampered by the fact that Ukraine does not permit dual citizenship, and the returnees must therefore officially renounce their previous citizenship. Since some of the countries in which they formerly resided (in particular, Uzbekistan) have made it very difficult for returnees to perform this act, this has left them in a legal limbo. It is therefore recommended that representatives of Canada's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade raise this issue when meeting with senior officials in Ukraine, and in the Central Asian states where most of the Crimean Tatars used to reside. Such interventions might help resolve a problem that has been the source of much grief to those returning to their homeland.