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# news release

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For release

## CANADA TO ASSIST UKRAINIAN ELECTIONS

Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet today announced a technical assistance package to help Ukraine organize and conduct its first democratic parliamentary elections, March 27. The \$2.5-million Canadian initiative is the largest and most comprehensive among international donors.

"These first-ever multiparty elections in Ukraine are of particular interest to Canada since so many Canadians have family and historical ties to the region. We welcome this clear move toward a democratic, pluralist political system and we are committed to helping Ukrainians ensure that this vote is conducted fairly and openly," Mr. Ouellet said.

In response to a Ukrainian request, Canada is supplying 445 tonnes of specialized paper with security features, which will be used to print ballots in Ukraine. An Antonov aircraft will arrive today at Montreal's Mirabel Airport to take delivery of the third and last shipment of Canadian paper. Canada is also working closely with the Central Electoral Commission (CEC) in Ukraine, providing technical support, training and a team of election observers. A Canadian elections expert is currently in Kiev to advise the CEC over a three-month period.

One problem facing Ukrainian election organizers is the electorate's lack of experience with multiparty elections. Canada will help finance the printing and distribution of the new elections law, as well as a citizen's guide to the law and a guide to campaign organization. Representatives from Elections Canada will train members of the Central Electoral Commission on the importance of public participation and getting out the vote.

Canadians will also train both state and independent Ukrainian media on their roles, rights and responsibilities during the election campaign.

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For further information, media representatives may contact:

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## Backgrounder

### CANADIAN ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE IN UKRAINE

Canada's \$2.5-million assistance program is designed to assist Ukraine with the organization and conduct of its first-ever multiparty elections, March 27. The assistance is not designed to influence the outcome of the elections. It is intended to help Ukraine ensure the integrity and transparency of the electoral process and to motivate Ukrainians to vote.

The Canadian assistance package is the largest and most comprehensive among international donors and underscores Canada's commitment to democratic reform in Ukraine. The package has four components:

1) **Technical and Material Assistance for the Electoral Process**  
(Elections Canada, CODE International)

At the request of the Ukrainian government, Canada is supplying 445 tonnes of specialized paper to Ukraine's Central Electoral Commission (CEC) to be used in printing ballots. The paper has special security features to prevent fraud and tampering. The paper is being shipped to Kiev for distribution to the local level where the printing and assembly of ballots will occur.

Canada has also provided the CEC with a Canadian elections expert who is providing technical, policy and administrative advice for a three month period. In addition, a "training for trainers" session, offered by officials from Elections Canada, is being organized.

2) **Voter/civic Education**  
(Elections Canada, Ukrainian Legal Foundation)

Working with the Ukrainian Legal Foundation, Canada will assist the printing and distribution of the new Elections Law, a Citizens Guide to the Law and a Guide to Campaign Organization. The goal is to counteract voter apathy and lack of knowledge about Ukraine's new electoral law.

Elections Canada officials will conduct a seminar with the CEC on getting out the vote and the importance of public participation.

3) **Training of Media in Elections Coverage**  
(Elections Canada, McMaster University/Niagara Institute)

Canada organized a training seminar for the Ukrainian state and independent media on their roles, rights and responsibilities during the election campaign. The seminar, held in Kiev, was also open to representatives from political parties.

A Canadian with expertise in the law and media will provide advice on a short-term basis to the Ukrainian State Television and Radio authority in Kiev.

4) **Elections Monitors and Observers**

A small monitoring team will be deployed to Kiev in early March, and a larger team of elections observers will travel to Ukraine 10 days before the vote, to witness the final days of the campaign and the balloting itself. The report of the delegation, along with technical assessments and the observation of Canada's embassy in Kiev, will form the basis for Canada's official conclusions on the election.