



LEGAL TRAINING PROJECTS WITH UKRAINE

Canada-Ukraine Legislative Education Program Established

The need to prepare legislation to underpin the fundamental political and economic transformations that would establish a democratic, law-based state and market economy in Ukraine has been evident for some time. Political analysts and Ukrainian government officials have all indicated that much of the draft legislation scheduled to be brought before Ukraine's parliament in the near future will be of fundamental importance. Indeed, many of the country's basic laws, including its constitution, have yet to be adopted. In addition, the immensity of the legislative agenda that lies before Ukraine's government and parliament is staggering.

Seven decades of Soviet rule, combined with Ukraine's colonial status within the former Soviet Union, have left the Ukrainian government and parliament poorly equipped for the difficult tasks ahead. On the national level, Ukraine inherited a largely ineffective parliamentary system with little legislative tradition or experience. Staffs of experts who conduct research and write policy recommendations and draft laws for government and parliamentary bodies are small, underpaid, ill-equipped and require greater access to outside information. At lower levels, municipal and regional governments still remain almost completely subordinated to central authorities and have little experience in local self-government.

Access to outside information and expertise, could be extremely helpful in formulating good policy to aid in the drafting of new legislation. Useful information can be obtained and access to experts gained in a relatively short time by directly exposing Ukrainians involved in the lawmaking process to the way in which the different branches,

levels and departments of government function and interact with one another in Canada, as well as their relation to the communities they serve.

On Jan. 19, 1995, Alberta Members of the Legislative Assembly Laurence Decore (Edmonton Glengarry) and Andrew Beniuk (Edmonton Norwood) as well as James Jacuta of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress (Alberta Provincial Council), met with Dr. Zenon Kohut, Director of the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies (CIUS) at the University of Alberta and agreed to collaborate on developing a proposal for a technical assistance project aimed at improving Ukraine's law-making capacities. Subsequently, Dr. Bohdan Klid and Myroslav Yurkevich of CIUS

began work on drafting a proposal.

Subsequently, a Board of Directors, chaired by Decore, was established. It was composed of provincial and federal legislators, government officials and others. A proposal was drafted and preliminary discussions held with potential partner organizations in Ukraine. In early June, representations were made by Board members to Canada's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Further discussions took place in Ukraine with Ukrainian government officials and others.

The proposed technical assistance program will be organized around policy - or legislation-related themes. Within the framework of each theme, specific tasks will be undertaken to achieve concrete and useful results: draft laws, policy studies creating the framework for legislation and amendments to current laws. Two themes will be selected every year for a three-year period. Upon selection of a theme, an inter-governmental working group, composed of members of the national legislative and executive branches of government, as well as local government officials, will be formed in Ukraine and begin work



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Board of Directors of the Canada-Ukraine Legislative Education Program meeting in Edmonton.

L-r: Front row: Laurence Decore, former Mayor of Edmonton; Stan Schumacher, MLA for Drumheller and Speaker of the Alberta Legislative Assembly; Raynell Andreychuk, Senator for Saskatchewan; David Kilgour, MP for Edmonton Southeast and Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons. Middle row: Andrew Beniuk, MLA, Edmonton-Norwood; Ihor Bardyn, Counsel for Mitchell, Bardyn and Zalucky of Toronto, and Director of the Ukrainian Studies Foundation; Michael Zwack, Counsel for Ogilvie and Co of Calgary. Back row: Ed Stelmach, MLA for Vegreville-Viking and Deputy Whip; Dmytro Jacuta, President of the Alberta Provincial Council of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress; Bohdan Klid, Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies.