

Press Release

Minister MacKay visits Canadian Parliamentary Centre in Kyiv

Kyiv - On July 18, 2007, Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs, the **Hon. Peter MacKay** visited the Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Centre at the National Parliamentary Library of Ukraine in Kyiv. The Centre was established by **Canadian Friends of Ukraine** to provide unique legislative and information support services for Ukraine's parliamentarians. The event took place during Minister MacKay's official three-day visit to Ukraine.

Welcoming the Minister at the National Parliamentary Library of Ukraine were the Acting Director General of the Library, Zoya Savina as well as representatives of Canadian Friends of Ukraine, Margareta Shpir and Lisa Shymko.

The Minister was joined by Canada's Ambassador to Ukraine, Abina Dann and Ukraine's Ambassador to Canada, Ihor Ostash.

During his remarks, Minister MacKay congratulated Canadian Friends of Ukraine on their outstanding contribution to democracy building in Ukraine as well as their ongoing efforts to strengthen Canada-Ukraine relations. The Minister noted the valuable impact that the Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Centre has made on Ukraine's legislative process. "Your organization's wonderful work is a true bridge between our countries and an example of how we can build a more democratic and peaceful world through cooperation," he said.

Among the guests in attendance, were deputies from a cross-section of political parties, including Oleh Bilorus (Tymoshenko bloc and Ukraine's first Ambassador to the USA), Leonid Kozhara (Party of Regions, Former Ambassador to Sweden), Ivan Krulko (Narodnyj Rukh-Our Ukraine). Also in attendance was the Chairman of the Union of Military Officers of Ukraine, Colonel Vyacheslav Bilous.

The Minister's visit to the Centre received extensive coverage by Ukraine's print and television media.

Following the Minister's visit to the Centre, Canadian Friends of Ukraine were invited to attend an exclusive roundtable with the Minister to discuss recent political developments in Ukraine. The forum also discussed issues such as NATO and WTO expansion.

Canadian Friends of Ukraine welcomed Minister MacKay's announcement that Canada has allocated \$16 million to promote democratic reform in Ukraine. Canada will also send a contingent of observers through the OSCE for the upcoming parliamentary election.

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From left to right: Leonid Kozhara (Member of Ukraine's Parliament, Party of Regions), Vyacheslav Bilous (President of Ukraine's Union of Military Officers), Margareta Shpir (Vice-President, Canadian Friends of Ukraine), Oleh Bilorus (Member of Ukraine's Parliament, Tymoshenko faction, Ukraine's first Ambassador to the USA), Lesia Shymko (Director, Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Centre), the Hon. Peter MacKay (Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs), Abina Dann (Canada's Ambassador to Ukraine), Ihor Ostash (Ukraine's Ambassador to Canada), Ivan Krulko (MP Narodnyj Rukh-Our Ukraine, not visible in photo)