

- *Can you tell us more about your plans for the upcoming visit and trade mission to Ukraine? What are its objectives and what do you hope to accomplish?*

My visit to Ukraine this fall has three main purposes. I will meet with various senior Ukrainian political leaders and discuss a range of issues of mutual interest. These subjects include European security, our program of bilateral technical and humanitarian cooperation with Ukraine, and ways we can work together to strengthen our bilateral relationship across the board.

I will also be leading a business mission to Ukraine. Representatives of some 30-40 companies will accompany me to Kyiv. This will be an opportunity to highlight the interest that exists in increasing Canada-Ukraine trade and investment. We hope to establish links between potential Canadian and Ukrainian partners. A strong commercial relationship should be an important part of our overall partnership with Ukraine.

Finally, I will also be participating in the inaugural Canada-Ukraine Intergovernmental Economic Commission (IEC). This first IEC will be a chance for both sides to identify and discuss the obstacles to greater bilateral trade and investment. We expect to emerge with a road map that will guide both sides as we clear these impediments. From our side, it will be important to get across the message that business can only thrive in a transparent and reformed economy. We can draw attention to the bureaucratic and legislative obstacles in Ukraine that our companies are encountering.

- *Canada's special relationship with Ukraine has opened a number of opportunities between the two countries. What priority areas do you see evolving from this cooperation?*

Our bilateral commercial relationship needs stimulation. Prime Minister Chrétien and President Kuchma agreed on this at their meeting in Moscow last April. As Ukraine implements comprehensive economic reforms (which we have been supporting through our technical cooperation program and in international financial institutions) and as we work through the IEC and other fora to remove the roadblocks to trade and investment, there is every reason to believe that this aspect of our relationship will develop strongly and complement the overall partnership.

I think, too, that we can be building on the strength of the Canadian-Ukrainian community to add more substance to our relationship. We've got a huge community in Canada, many of whom are actively interested in Ukraine. President Kuchma has first-hand experience of this from his visit to Winnipeg in October 1994, when Canadian-Ukrainians gave him a great welcome.

His Excellency Hennadiy Udovenko
Minister of Foreign Affairs
KYIV, Ukraine

Minister of Foreign Affairs



Excellency:

Allow me to express my congratulations and regards on the occasion of Ukraine's fifth anniversary of independence.

We look back on the past five years as a period in which Canada and Ukraine have built a close and warm partnership. The partnership between our countries has been based in large part on shared goals in the international arena: building a stable and peaceful order in Europe; expanding the principle of solving conflicts without resort to violence; and accelerating the spread of democracy around the world.

Of course, our friendship also flows from the fact that so many Canadians trace their roots back to your country. This day is a particularly joyous one for the Ukrainian-Canadian community, who celebrate with you the realization of the historic dream of an independent Ukraine. The active interest of so many Ukrainian-Canadians in developments in Ukraine is a rich resource for us as we seek new ways to strengthen the bonds between our countries.

The challenge that lies ahead is for our countries to augment this relationship with a strong commercial dimension. The ties that are built by trade and investment can serve as the basis for an even closer partnership, enhancing our ability to cooperate in a wide range of areas. I look forward to travelling to Ukraine in October at the head of a senior business mission to inaugurate the first Intergovernmental Economic Commission. I have high hopes that this visit will herald a new era in our bilateral relations.

In closing, allow me to re-iterate my congratulations on this historic day and express my best wishes for the prosperity of your country in years to come.

Lloyd Axworthy

That's why I've created a Canada-Ukraine Advisory Council that will draw this community into our search for ways to strengthen our ties with Ukraine. The Council is composed of prominent members of the community and officials from my department and across the government.

- *What do you see as the role of this Canada-Ukraine Advisory Council?*

I have asked the Canada-Ukraine Advisory Council to come up with practical ways to diversify and build on this crucial partnership. I'm convinced that this will be an effective way to channel the constructive energy of the community in support of our overall objectives with Ukraine. The Council has had its first meeting, where we talked about how the Canadian-Ukrainian community can support and enrich the efforts of the Government of Canada to build a stronger relationship with Ukraine. Work has already begun on fleshing out areas for cooperation. I would propose that more consultations be held prior to my visit to Ukraine this fall. In this way, we can make sure that the community is able to contribute to this important trip.

- *There are plans for a Canada-Ukraine Business Initiative, with conferences and*

trade shows next June. Can you tell us more about this project and any other such initiatives?

This is essentially a private sector industry-driven initiative, with a strong western Canadian focus. **The federal government, through Western Economic Diversification, and the three prairie provincial governments have been very supportive. Although this initiative is still in the planning stage, it aims to organize a high-level conference and trade fair in Calgary and other western sites in June 1997.** During my visit to Ukraine this fall, I hope to discuss this initiative and convince the key Ukrainian players to come to western Canada.

In addition, my department is continuing its normal activities, through the trade fairs and missions program, to increase Canadian commercial links with Ukraine. We are already recruiting Canadian companies to take part in **Dream House '96**, a housing fair scheduled to take place in Kyiv in late October. We will soon focus on other activities in the agri-food and oil and gas sectors.