



UKRAINIAN JUDGES STUDY CANADIAN COURT SYSTEMS



Twenty judges from Ukraine visited Canada in February and March to study Canadian court systems under the three-year, \$2-million Judicial Reform Cooperation Project sponsored by CIDA.

The objectives of the project are to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Ukrainian courts and to contribute to greater judicial independence. This will be done by :

- setting up model courts and judicial training centres;
- providing support for the publication of a Code of Ethics and Judicial Guidelines, and the organization of a Conference of Judicial Independence; and
- providing institutional strengthening to the Ministry of Justice, the Supreme Court and the Judicial Council of Ukraine.

The visits to Canada are intended to provide Ukrainian judges with a hands-on opportunity to observe Canada's court processes, stated Guy Goulard, Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs, who is spearheading the project. The Canadian system demonstrates the division of responsibilities between court, staff and judges. The visits will also enable visiting judges to observe activities illustrative of judicial independence and judicial conduct within an open and democratic society. The Canadian experience should enable them to identify possible improvements to the Ukrainian system upon their return.

The delegation of judges represented various cities, regions and court systems of Ukraine. These included the Shevchenkivsky Court (Kyiv), Melnytopol and Ivano-Frankivsk City Courts, the Supreme and Arbitration Courts of Ukraine, as well as Zaporizhia and Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast Courts. The delegation also included six women, a fair representation of the judiciary in Ukraine, about one quarter of whom are women and are generally concentrated in the lower courts.

The Canadian program lasted six weeks, of which the first two were spent in Ottawa. The judges then split into three groups in order to study provincial court systems in Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario.

In Alberta, the program included visits with Judges of the Court of Queen's Bench; Provincial, Family and Youth Court; Justices of the Court of Appeal, Brian Evans, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Alberta, Crown Prosecutors and court staff. The visiting judges attended court in Edmonton, Red Deer, Vegreville and Calgary, and met with Edmonton Police Service and RCMP, officials at the University of Alberta Law School and the Alberta Law Reform Institute,



The recent delegation of Ukrainian judges visited Canada to study the various federal and provincial court systems under the Judicial Reform Cooperation Project.



A key outcome of the visit will be the application of the Canadian judicial experience and methods to Ukrainian courts.

and toured Edmonton's Women's Prison.

Those Ukrainian judges who went to Manitoba examined the operations of various courts and were hosted by Manitoba Chief Justice Benjamin Hewak at a reception with Ukrainian lawyers in Winnipeg, and attended a dinner at the Ukrainian National Home.

The Ontario delegation of judges spent six working days in Toronto, two in Hamilton and two in Newmarket. As well as observing the court processes in that province, the judges also met with the Hamilton Ukrainian Professional and Business Association and the Association of Ukrainian Canadian Jurists.

On March 8, the three sub-delegations returned to Ottawa, where they had an opportunity to compare notes from their separate experiences and present their ideas

on how to apply their new knowledge to their own specific courts.

The task before judges in Ukraine is formidable, and starts with the everyday problems of running their individual courts. Court facilities are cramped, outdated and understaffed, and there is no support infrastructure for judges.

Above everything, the delegates were unanimous in their admiration of the judicial independence they observed in the Canadian court system, and the respect that Canadian judges command. These are the building blocks of a democratic society, and Ukraine needs serious judicial reform to achieve these types of goals.