

By Marco Levytsky,
With files from UCC National

The Ukrainian Canadian Congress is urging the federal government to use the free trade negotiations with Ukraine as a lever in making Ukraine adhere to democratic principles and human rights.

A resolution adopted at the XXIII Triennial Congress calls upon the UCC to encourage both the governments of Canada and Ukraine to adhere strictly to the so-called "Road Map" of September 2009 governing

bilateral relations between them and Ukraine to adhere to its obligations as a member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) and that "Canada insist on such adherence as a condition of entering into the free trade agreement between Canada and Ukraine."

Ukraine has breached several parts of the agreement under the rule of President Viktor Yanukovich.

The resolution came out of the "Engaging Ukraine" workshop session, Nov. 6 which followed a panel on the changing Ukraine in which former Ambassadors Yuri Scherbak (Ukraine) and Derek Fraser (Canada) as well as current Ukrainian Ambassador to Canada, Dr. Ihor Ostash and current Canadian Ambassador to Ukraine, G. Daniel Caron, spoke.

Canada should pursue the negotiation of the free trade agreement, said Fraser, adding:

"It should insist, in parallel with the EU's conditions, not merely on economic liberalization, but -also on the development of democratic standards. The bargaining position of both Canada and the EU. Negotiating in parallel with the EU can strengthen the bargaining position of both Canada and the EU."

The XXIII Congress of Ukrainian Canadians themed "Honouring the Past, Inspiring the Future" concluded with a strong mandate for the term 2010-2013 to: engage Ukraine, support enhanced youth engagement and leadership training for community organizations; and to find ways to connect the 1.2M Ukrainian Canadians through initiatives such as the arts and social media.

"This Congress has provided a strong mandate for the community to speak with one voice through the

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Ottawa matches Alberta's UCAMA grant – six years later

By Marco Levytsky

Six years after both the Government of Alberta and the City of Edmonton pledged \$3 million each for the construction of a new facility for the Ukrainian Canadian Archives and Museum of Alberta (UCAMA), the federal government came up with its own matching grant.

Nov. 6, during the XXXIII Triennial Congress of Ukrainian Canadians, held in Edmonton, Nov. 5 –7, Rob Merrifield, Minister of State (Transport) announced "joint federal-provincial funding of \$6.25 million toward the relocation of the UCAMA in Edmonton."

But the actual portion the federal government is allocating amounts only to \$3.25 million and "will come from the Provincial-Territorial Base Fund, conditional upon the initiative meeting program requirements as part of a provincial Capital Plan under this program."

Alberta Minister of Culture and Community Spirit told Ukrainian News on Nov. 10 that the Alberta government has not provided and new money for this project beyond the initial \$3 million pledges in 2004.

He added that he was aware the UCAMA board had asked the federal government for \$8 million.

Blackett had offered UCAMA an additional \$4 million two years ago and wrote then UCAMA President Michelle Tracy in a Jan. 19 letter:

"An additional \$4 million has been earmarked for you project through the Major Community Facilities Program (MCFP) provided your society can confirm the viability of your revised project by March 2009." He told Ukrainian News that program expired with the fiscal year ending March 31, 2009 and is no longer available.

In that same letter, Blackett wrote:

"The Government of Alberta is currently working with the Federal Government regarding the Building

Canada Fund. These negotiations are ongoing to ensure the best interests of Alberta taxpayers are reflected in the agreements. I suggest you keep in touch with your contacts in the Federal Government regarding your funding request, and keep MCFP administration informed of any developments in this regard."

Current UCAMA President Paul Teterenko, who accompanied Merrifield during the Congress announcement later confirmed to Ukrainian News that the federal government had been made aware of the letter and the deadline.

Blackett also told Ukrainian News that the federal government was made aware of that provisional funding.

However, Jason Kenney, federal Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and Minister Responsible for Multiculturalism Jason Kenney denied knowing anything about a March 31 deadline in a March 27, 2009, interview with Ukrainian News.

Kenney said he spoke with Blackett earlier that week and Blackett didn't say anything about a deadline.

Blackett told Ukrainian News on Nov. 10, 2010, the provincial government still supports the UCAMA project and considers it worthwhile, but is not in a position to provide any additional financial support at this time.

Blackett also said he does not know whether the money the federal government will be providing under the Provincial-Territorial Base Fund is money that has already been granted or will be provided separately.

The new location entails the renovation and conversion of the historic Lodge Hotel in Edmonton into a museum, archives, and library facility. The museum will showcase Ukrainian culture throughout western Canadian communities. UCAMA is a not-for-profit society devoted to the preservation of Ukrainian Canadian history and culture.

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