



**Canadian Delegation to the OSCE
STATEMENT TO THE PERMANENT COUNCIL
2 December 2004**

Statement on Ukraine

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Canada is following the developments in Ukraine very closely. Our Government and the Canadian public remain engaged and concerned with the situation. We fervently hope that events on the ground will evolve peacefully, consonant with Ukraine's OSCE commitments for a free, democratic, unified, and secure Ukraine.

We wish to reiterate our support for the territorial integrity of Ukraine and for the peaceful resolution of the crisis, which must be determined by the Ukrainian people and institutions, free from undue outside interference. We commend the Ukrainian people for maintaining their protests in a peaceful manner.

Mr. Chairman,

We share the concerns raised in reports by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of Media of continuing efforts to muzzle the press and arrest of journalists. Nevertheless, we are also pleased to note that increasing numbers of journalists in Ukraine are refusing to take direction on how to report and have now pledged to provide more honest reporting to the Ukrainian people. We would like to underline the importance of free press in time of transition, a cornerstone of democratic development.

We would like to thank Secretary General Kubis, and other prominent regional leaders, for their efforts recently to assist in the resolution of the situation. The Roundtable discussions are proving to be a very useful vehicle in advancing the political talks between the parties, especially by committing to the non-use of force. In particular, we welcome the agreements reached on December 1 in the second meeting of the Roundtable and the possibility of a further meeting, following the decision of the Supreme Court.

As always, OSCE/ODIHR remains committed to offer assistance, if so requested. They have played a very useful role in the election observation and we encourage them to continue to monitor and report on the post-election process. We welcome the readiness of their team to undertake further work should circumstances permit.

Mr. Chairman, our Prime Minister, the Honourable Paul Martin, stated this week in Parliament that, “Canada is prepared to do whatever it can whenever it can, to ensure that elections in Ukraine are fair, open and transparent”. Our Prime Minister also stated that, “This election should not be about the east, or the west, or the north, or the south. It should be about the democratic right of the people of Ukraine.”

We have taken careful note of Ambassador Strohal’s 30 November letter regarding contingency planning and the need for speedy action as events unfold. Canada, therefore, stands ready and willing to be helpful to assist the OSCE/ ODIHR and the Ukrainian people in the future.