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PRESS RELEASE

Canadians Volunteer to Monitor Ukraine Election

Winnipeg, MB, Canada - January 29, 2010 - As Ukraine prepares to go to the polls on February 7, 2010 to elect a new President, hundreds of Canadians are travelling once again, working as election observers. The election observer mission, organized by the Canada Ukraine Foundation (CUF) in partnership with the Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC), supports transparency and democracy by assessing the election process. These volunteers are there to view the process and by their presence, encourage a fair and democratic election. They will also report on both the positive and negative activities they may encounter.

The first round of elections was held on January 17, 2010, a process which was reported to have been 'adequate' in its attempt to meet international election standards. Nonetheless, Canadian observers were diligent in their work and uncovered several irregularities including a well-organized attempt to sabotage the elections in 28 villages in the Kyiv region (Mission Report can be found at www.ucc.ca or www.cufoundation.ca).

This second round of elections, which leaves 2 candidates in the race – current Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko and former Prime Minister Victor Yanukovich – will require the same diligence and strong neutral election observer presence to ensure that irregularities do not plague the outcome. Many of the volunteers about to leave for Ukraine this weekend have international election observer experience which will be needed in what will certainly be a very emotional and highly contested election.

Included among this group of Canadians observers are MP James Bezan (Selkirk-Interlake) and MP Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park) who also observed the 2007 parliamentary elections in Ukraine.

It is widely acknowledged that during this second round of voting, the political stakes are high. We are confident that Canadian election observers will fulfill their duties and obligations as international observers.

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Canadian election observers will be available to provide commentary and first hand observations for your media outlet.

In the days running up to elections, and on Election Day Feb 7, 2010, please note the following phone numbers of people who will be prepared to provide current updates on events in Ukraine as they unfold or follow the mission on the web at:

www.cufoundation.ca
www.ucc.ca

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