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UCC Briefing Note

**The Honourable François-Philippe Champagne, PC, MP
Minister of Foreign Affairs**

Canada's Support for Ukraine

October 22, 2020

The Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC) thanks the Honourable François-Philippe Champagne, Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs, for the opportunity to meet and discuss issues of importance to the Ukrainian Canadian community.

The UCC makes the following policy recommendations to the Government of Canada:

1. Canada's sanctions policy

- **Toughen economic sanctions on Russia** - Canada in cooperation with the EU, the G7 and other like-minded nations must toughen economic sanctions on Russia. Such actions will deter further Russian efforts to seize more Ukrainian territory and pressure Moscow into full implementation of the Minsk agreements and withdrawal of Russian troops (and their proxies) from the territory of Ukraine, including Crimea.
- **Use the Magnitsky Act** more robustly and in the way it was intended - to directly target human rights abusers in Russia by instituting travel bans and asset freezes against them, to hold Russian officials to account for human rights abuses against Ukrainian prisoners being held illegally in Russia and to sanction perpetrators of religious and cultural persecution against Crimean Tatars.
- Designate the so-called **Donetsk and Luhansk "Peoples' Republics"** as **terrorist organizations** and designate the **Russian Federation as a state sponsor of terrorism**.
- Explicitly voice the **Government of Canada's opposition to Nord Stream II and adopt legislation that would mirror US sanctions** on companies involved in the construction of the pipeline.

2. Canada-Ukraine defence and security relations

- **Actively participate in the proposed Crimean Platform** to support international efforts to end Russia's occupation of Crimea.
- **Provide Ukraine with defensive equipment**, most importantly anti-tank, anti-artillery systems and re-introduce support for aerial and other surveillance systems.
- **Strengthen Ukraine's Security Forces** - Strengthening the ability Ukraine's security forces to defend their citizens against foreign aggression will prevent further bloodshed and facilitate a diplomatic resolution.
- **Support the reform of Ukraine's military** - Canada must continue to support the reform of Ukraine's military through the NATO-Ukraine Trust Funds.

3. Ukraine Development Program

- **Stress to Ukraine’s authorities that continuing the path of democratic and economic reforms** and anti-corruption efforts are key to maintaining Canadian and international support for Ukraine.
- **Continue to assist Ukraine’s civil society** to ensure the continuing consolidation of democracy and democratic institutions. Particularly, Canada should continue to assist with programs that will build capacity and increase the effectiveness of Ukraine’s political parties, media and independent journalism and non-governmental organizations.

1. Canada’s sanctions policy

The last sanctions action taken by the Government of Canada with respect to Russia’s ongoing war against Ukraine and Russia’s violations of the human rights of Ukrainian citizens under Russian occupation took place in January, 2020, when Canada sanctioned six individuals involved in the organization of illegal elections in Russian-occupied Crimea.

For almost one year, Canada has taken no measures to strengthen sanctions on Russia or Russian officials for the war that Russia continues to wage against Ukraine.

The last significant sanctions action by the Government of Canada took place in March 2019, when 114 individuals and 15 entities were sanctioned for aggressive actions against Ukraine – more than 18 months ago.

Russia’s systematic policy of targeting those who oppose Russia’s occupation of Crimea and parts of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts continues. For example, in September 2020, seven Crimean Tatar civic journalists and activists were sentenced to prison terms of between 13 and 19 years by the Russian Southern Military Regional “Court.” Over 100 citizens of Ukraine are illegally imprisoned by the Russian regime. The Russian “investigators,” “prosecutors,” and “judges” and officials responsible for their illegal imprisonment are publicly known.

As Russia continues to escalate its malign activities against Ukraine, Georgia, and Belarus and continues to target those who oppose the Putin regime, opposition to the completion of the Nord Stream II pipeline has significantly grown in the European Union, particularly within Germany.

If completed, the Nord Stream II Pipeline, connecting Russia and Germany, will seriously destabilize the European continent’s energy security and make the European Union significantly more reliant on Russian gas. The completion of the pipeline will also undermine Ukraine’s security, allowing Russia to bypass Ukrainian pipelines to deliver

natural gas to the EU and removing one of the last impediments to a full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia.

The United States, Canada's closest and most important ally, vigorously opposes the construction of Nord Stream II. US legislation "requires that the President impose broad sanctions on foreign persons or companies involved in providing vessels for the installation of deep-sea pipeline for the Nord Stream 2 project."

The UCC makes the following recommendations to the Government of Canada:

- ***Toughen economic sanctions on Russia*** - Canada in cooperation with the EU, the G7 and other like-minded nations must toughen economic sanctions on Russia. Such actions will deter further Russian efforts to seize more Ukrainian territory and pressure Moscow into full implementation of the Minsk agreements and withdrawal of Russian troops (and their proxies) from the territory of Ukraine, including Crimea.
- ***Use the Magnitsky Act more robustly and in the way it was intended*** - to directly target human rights abusers in Russia by instituting travel bans and asset freezes against them, to hold Russian officials to account for human rights abuses against Ukrainian prisoners being held illegally in Russia and to sanction perpetrators of religious and cultural persecution against Crimean Tatars.
- ***Designate the so-called Donetsk and Luhansk "Peoples' Republics" as terrorist organizations and designate the Russian Federation as a state sponsor of terrorism.***
- ***Explicitly voice the Government of Canada's opposition to Nord Stream II and adopt legislation that would mirror US sanctions on companies involved in the construction of the pipeline.***

2. Canada-Ukraine defence and security relations

The UCC is pleased that the Government of Canada extended Operation UNIFIER, Canada's military training mission in Ukraine, through March 2022. The UCC is also pleased that the Government of Canada recently announced the Parliamentary Accountability for the Security Sector in Ukraine project, which will strengthen the Ukrainian Parliament's oversight of Ukraine's security sector.

Russia's growing presence in the Arctic, especially coupled with its assertive behaviour in Eastern Europe, clearly underlines the need for a strong NATO policy of deterrence in Europe's east to dissuade the Kremlin from further aggression.

Canada must consider the existential threat presented to Canada and allied states by Russia's continued violation of international law. Canada must look at ways to counter

Russia's aggression and deter further attacks against Ukraine or other states in the region.

The Ukrainian government has recently announced its intention to form the "Crimean Platform – to increase effectiveness of the international response to the ongoing occupation of Crimea, to address mounting security threats, to enhance international pressure on the Kremlin to make it change its behavior, to prevent further human rights violations and to protect victims, and to achieve an eventual de-occupation of Crimea and its return to Ukraine."

The UCC makes the following recommendations to the Government of Canada:

- ***Actively participate in the proposed Crimean Platform to support international efforts to end Russia's occupation of Crimea.***
- ***Provide Ukraine with defensive equipment, most importantly anti-tank, anti-artillery systems and re-introduce support for aerial and other surveillance systems.***
- ***Strengthen Ukraine's Security Forces - Strengthening the ability Ukraine's security forces to defend their citizens against foreign aggression will prevent further bloodshed and facilitate a diplomatic resolution.***
- ***Support the reform of Ukraine's military - Canada must continue to support the reform of Ukraine's military through the NATO-Ukraine Trust Funds.***

3. Ukraine development program

UCC is pleased with Canada commitment to provide \$50 million annually in support of socio-economic programs to build a strong and accountable democracy and contribute to peace and security in Ukraine and the region.

The best way to ensure the return of peace to Europe is to ensure the success of a democratic, prosperous and strong Ukraine, whose territorial integrity and sovereignty is respected.

Recent months have seen a concerning trend of regression in the commitment to reforms by Ukraine's authorities. Political opponents of President Zelenskyy have been targeted with legal persecution; several officials who served in the pre-Revolution of Dignity Yanukovich administration have been appointed to high government posts.

Concerns have also been raised about attempts by the authorities to undermine the independence of institutions such as the National Bank of Ukraine and the Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecutor. Ukraine's international partners such as the EU have also pointed to "worrying signals over the readiness to resist vested interests."

The continued strengthening of Ukraine's vibrant civil society and independent media institutions, which serve to preclude backsliding on necessary reform by the authorities – particularly in the fields of rule of law and judicial independence reforms, is especially important.

The UCC makes the following recommendation to the Government of Canada:

- ***Stress to Ukraine's authorities that continuing the path of democratic and economic reforms and anti-corruption efforts are key to maintaining Canadian and international support for Ukraine.***
- ***Continue to assist Ukraine's civil society to ensure the continuing consolidation of democracy and democratic institutions. Particularly, Canada should continue to assist with programs that will build capacity and increase the effectiveness of Ukraine's political parties, media and independent journalism and non-governmental organizations.***