



**UKRAINIAN CANADIAN STUDENTS' UNION  
СОЮЗ УКРАЇНСЬКОГО СТУДЕНТСТВА КАНАДИ  
UNION DES ÉTUDIANTS UKRAINIENS CANADIENS**

---

As a leading voice in the Ukrainian Canadian community, the Ukrainian Canadian Students' Union (SUSK) adopts the following positions with respect to key policy issues relating to both Canada and Ukraine.

**Democracy, Territorial Integrity, and Peace for Ukraine**

The history of the Ukrainian people is the story of a struggle for independence, most recently exemplified by the “Maidan Revolution of Dignity”, in which Ukrainian citizens demonstrated their desire to live freely, rejecting subjugation by foreign powers, corrupt dictators, and oligarchic clans.

In the wake of the Maidan revolution, Russian President Vladimir Putin has repeatedly utilized state-sponsored terrorism and methods of hybrid warfare to destabilize Ukraine, both in Crimea and in the eastern Ukrainian regions of Luhansk and Donetsk. His pejorative rhetoric towards Ukraine and his utter disregard for international law presents a serious threat not only for Ukraine, but for the global international order. SUSK holds firmly to the belief that Ukraine is an independent, sovereign nation state. SUSK calls upon the Russian Federation to honour its duties as a signatory of the Budapest Memorandum, an international legal instrument which guaranteed Ukraine’s territorial integrity, by withdrawing all troops from the sovereign territory of Ukraine and respecting Ukrainian independence. In addition, we ask the current Canadian government to continue to support Ukraine in its efforts to achieve peace and stability.

The illegal annexation of Crimea in March 2014 and the invasion of eastern Ukraine by the Russian Federation has led to numerous human rights violations. In addition to the unjust detainment of many Ukrainian citizens, approximately 1.6 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Ukraine suffer immense hardships, including threats to their physical safety and discrimination, as well as inadequate living conditions and psychosocial stress related to their forced departure from their homes. Although civil society organizations have spearheaded the response to displacement, a concerted response involving national and international resources and institutions is needed to provide adequate protection for Ukraine’s IDPs. SUSK calls upon the international community to monitor and condemn these human rights violations, and support IDPs both from Crimea and eastern Ukraine.

**Aid for Ukraine**

For the last three years, Ukraine has been plagued by war. Since the Russian invasion of eastern Ukraine in summer 2014, over 9,900 lives have been lost with well over 23,300 injured/wounded from the ongoing conflict. SUSK would like to recognize the efforts of Canadian individuals and organizations who have immeasurably contributed to various forms of assistance and aid for Ukraine in recent years. Of particular note are the Canadian healthcare professionals who have lent their expertise to help many victims of war. The latest medical mission organized by the Canada Ukraine Foundation and Operation Rainbow Canada helped change the lives of many patients with varying degrees of injuries. Most recently, we applaud the initiatives of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress and the international organization International Charitable Foundation “Caritas Ukraine” for recently transferring 13 ambulances to various areas throughout Ukraine. The need for medical assistance in Ukraine is ongoing, and SUSK hopes that the Canadian government and the general public continues to provide assistance to the Ukrainian people ravaged by war.



## **Civil Rights**

SUSK urges the government of Ukraine to adopt provisions highlighted in the European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights. It is important to expand the rights of LGBTQ individuals in Ukraine. While the Ukrainian government has amended the labour code to prevent workplace discrimination because of sexual identity and orientation, SUSK urges Ukraine to focus on recognizing same-sex relationships through constitutional amendment. In addition to this, SUSK encourages Ukraine to allow for various viewpoints to have a voice in the media, and to allow for peaceful gatherings of groups. Free speech and freedom of assembly are hallmarks of an established democracy and should be allowed to flourish.

## **Ukraine's Integration into the EU and NATO**

Ukraine holds strategic geopolitical significance in Europe. SUSK believes that Ukraine's long-term prosperity and security with the West and Western institutions depend on its ability to expand its economic, military, and political ties with other democratic institutions. Ukraine's commitment to European values was demonstrated during the Revolution of Dignity. Consequently, Ukraine has established an Association Agreement with the European Union and SUSK calls on all EU member states to ratify the agreement allowing it to go into full force.

SUSK notes, with approval, the initiative taken by both Ukraine and Canada in securing the Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement (CUFTA), representing a milestone in Ukrainian Canadian bilateral relations. Forming further partnerships and trade agreements with other countries worldwide will help spur Ukraine's economic growth and act as a catalyst for much-needed democratic and state reforms. Ukraine's integration into the international family of democratic nations would be further enhanced by Ukraine's induction into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU).

SUSK encourages the Canadian government to call on its allies to uphold their support of Ukraine. As Russian aggression continues in Eastern Ukraine, we ask the Canadian government to continue their support of military and humanitarian aid to Ukraine. SUSK emphasizes the importance of NATO's goals and mandates, and encourages consistent funding by its members. SUSK will continue, in concert with our Ukrainian Canadian partners, to advocate for such outcomes. We hope that we have the unrelenting support of our Canadian government, as we know it is a great advocate for the people of Ukraine on the world stage.

## **Canada's Diplomatic Relations with Ukraine**

In the last few years, Canada has continued to advance its historic relationship with the Ukrainian state which re-declared independence in 1991. The Canadian government has extended significant support and has been forthright in promoting the democratic process in Ukraine. Canadian diplomatic missions, parliamentary hearings, and government calls to action have all greatly helped bring issues affecting Ukraine to the forefront of Canadian foreign policy. Canada's stalwart support has garnered Ukraine its due international attention and has helped mobilize the international community to assist and support Ukraine during its territorial crisis and present ongoing war. The Government of Canada's efforts, particularly its training of Ukrainian military personnel and new police forces, is notable. While SUSK commends the Canadian government for its leadership in assisting Ukraine during the last several years, we will continue to encourage the Canadian Government to support Ukraine in a variety of ways including military training missions, loans through the International Monetary Fund, election monitoring, humanitarian aid operations, and strengthening civil society organizations to improve civic participation in public life.



### **Canada's First National Internment Operations**

During Canada's First National Internment Operations (1914-1920), thousands of men, women, and children were branded as "enemy aliens," and subjected to state-sanctioned indignities, including internment, forced heavy labour, and disenfranchisement. Internees were subjected to such treatment not because of any wrong they had done, but only because of who they were, where they had come from. The majority of civilian internees were Ukrainians and other Europeans. Racist and anti-immigrant attitudes were common during the pre-war period. Together with wartime xenophobia and ignorance, these attitudes were largely responsible for the internment operations. Internees were held in 24 camps across Canada.

SUSK encourages all Canadians to respect and preserve the memory of all internees through commemoration, to remind all of us of the importance of vigilance in defense of human rights and civil liberties of all people. Commemorative sites and initiatives are supported by the Canadian First World War Internment Recognition Fund. For example, SUSK urges the Canadian government and specifically the Minister of Canadian Heritage, the Honourable Mélanie Joly, to protect and preserve the Spirit Lake Internee Cemetery, which has deteriorated over time. The Cemetery, located within the Spirit Lake Internment Camp in Québec, is an important symbol of Ukrainian Canadian history and its restoration would mark a crucial sign of respect to Ukrainian Canadian families whose ancestors were forcefully interned at the site during the First World War. Canada's past actions cannot be corrected; however, our efforts today can mark this dark chapter in Canadian history and ensure that such injustices do not carry forward into the future.

### **Holodomor Awareness**

The Holodomor famine-genocide of 1932-1933, perpetrated by Joseph Stalin's regime, was one of the worst crimes against humanity of the 20th century. Despite considerable documentation and international acknowledgement, unfounded criticisms and denials of this genocide persist, both in Ukraine and around the world. SUSK is proud of the steps that have been taken by the Canadian government to recognize and commemorate this horrible tragedy orchestrated to destroy and silence the voice of a proud and resilient nation.

We continue to commemorate the victims of the Holodomor and ensure their eternal memory by raising awareness of this genocide on university campuses across Canada. In addition, we acknowledge the efforts by Canadian filmmakers for producing "Bitter Harvest" - a film that SUSK was proud to pre-release alongside D Films in several cities across the country with its member organizations. SUSK also recognizes the work by the Canada Ukraine Foundation with the Holodomor National Awareness Tour travelling across the country and is providing students with an innovative learning experience about the man-made genocide. SUSK remains committed to raising awareness, remembering the deceased, and educating the generations that live on today about the Holodomor.

### **Ukrainian Studies in Canada and Canadians Studying in Ukraine**

SUSK recognizes the need to uphold and promote the study of Ukrainian language and culture in Canada. Programs in universities across Canada in these areas are a primary channel through which Ukrainian culture can be passed on from one generation to the next. SUSK is committed to ensuring that the study of Ukrainian language and culture in Canada continues for generations to come.



**UKRAINIAN CANADIAN STUDENTS' UNION**  
**СОЮЗ УКРАЇНСЬКОГО СТУДЕНТСТВА КАНАДИ**  
**UNION DES ÉTUDIANTS UKRAINIENS CANADIENS**

---

SUSK is also fully committed to the ongoing promotion and growth of Ukrainian studies in Canada. SUSK is committed to working alongside research institutions such as the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, the Prairie Centre for the Study of Ukrainian Heritage, the Kule Folklore Centre, and the Centre for Ukrainian Canadian Studies to strongly encourage students to become involved in Ukrainian Studies, including: Ukrainian language lessons, and classes specific to Ukrainian history, literature, culture, folklore, business, politics, and Ukrainian Canadian history. SUSK will continue to support and encourage students to enroll in programs across Canada in all aspects of Ukrainian Studies. SUSK encourages all students to attend open lectures, seminars, presentations, and conferences with themes pertinent to Ukrainian Studies. In addition, we encourage everyone to consult books, articles, and other resources relating to Ukrainian topics in universities, as well as public libraries.

In many universities across Canada, students have the opportunity to study in a number of countries abroad. SUSK encourages students to take part in exchange or study abroad programs offering opportunities to study in Ukraine. SUSK also encourages students to explore programs run through their home university and other institutions across Canada. It is beneficial for Ukrainian Canadian students to understand what modern day life in Ukraine is like, to meet and network with the people of Ukraine, and to continue to grow and maintain the Ukrainian language, culture, and traditions.

#### **Ukrainian Youth - SUSK/SUSN/SUSTA/SKUMO**

SUSK recognizes that young people are the power and the future of every nation. As a student organization in the Ukrainian diaspora, SUSK strives to unite Ukrainian students and youth in Canada and give them a voice to the broader Canadian community, including all levels of government. SUSK will continue to work to strengthen its relationship with its regional organizations at post-secondary institutions across Canada. SUSK will also work to establish working relationships with youth in the United States of America, including through the Federation of Ukrainian Student Organizations of America (SUSTA), the Ukrainian American Coordinating Council (UACC), and the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America (UCCA). On an international level, SUSK will work to forge lasting relationships with youth/student organizations in Ukraine and the diaspora, including the Bund Ukrainischer Studenten in Deutschland (SUSN), the Ukrainian Association of Students' Self-Government (UASS; Ukraine), and other member organizations of the World Congress of Ukrainian Youth Organizations (SKUMO).

SUSK recognizes that supporting the legitimacy of student run organizations in Ukraine is vital to the advancement of Ukrainian society. Creating and maintaining ties with student government at established post-secondary institutions, allows for the further empowerment of student leaders in Ukraine. By sharing best practices between student run organizations of Ukraine and Canada, Ukrainian society will further evolve and flourish. SUSK believes that strengthening international ties and empowering Ukrainian youth from around the world is critically important to the future strength of the Ukrainian diaspora.

#### **Canada's Sesquicentennial and 125 Years of Ukrainian Settlement in Canada**

2017 marks the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Canada's Confederation: Canada 150. SUSK recognizes the importance of this historical milestone, and is proud to join in the celebration of Canada 150. SUSK is involved in numerous initiatives, events, and other celebrations that are commemorating Canada 150, including dedicating this year's SUSK Congress, being held in Canada's capital, to Canada 150.



**UKRAINIAN CANADIAN STUDENTS' UNION  
СОЮЗ УКРАЇНСЬКОГО СТУДЕНТСТВА КАНАДИ  
UNION DES ÉTUDIANTS UKRAINIENS CANADIENS**

---

Since 1953, SUSK has been uniting Ukrainian Canadian students across Canada and mobilizing thousands to promote the Ukrainian Canadian identity as well as practice Canadian principles, such as multiculturalism. Over the last 125 years, Ukrainians have left an imprint on nearly all aspects of Canadian life, such as hockey, giving rise to Ukrainian Canadians Wayne Gretzky and Terry Sawchuk; politically, filling positions such as the Governor General, federal cabinet ministers, and municipal mayors; the first ever Canadian female astronaut, Roberta Bondar, is a proud Ukrainian Canadian; and culturally contributing to Canada's multicultural fabric. SUSK recognizes the tremendous contribution Ukrainians and the Ukrainian community have made, and continue to make, in developing and strengthening Canada. In addition, SUSK acknowledges that Canada has reciprocated the contribution of development towards the Ukrainian Canadian community; if it were not for Canada, its policies and open arms, the Ukrainian Canadian community would not be the most vibrant, organized, and strong Ukrainian diaspora in the world. SUSK would also like to recognize the strength of the Ukrainian diaspora and commends the Ukrainian World Congress for its 50th anniversary. SUSK would not only like to celebrate and wish Canada a Happy 150<sup>th</sup> Birthday, but also celebrate the historical and reciprocal relationship between Ukrainian Canadians and the greater Canadian community. Thank you Canada, and Mnohaya Lita!

**Ukrainian Canadian Students' Union (SUSK) National Executive 2016-2017**