



## President's Message

Dear Readers,

Welcome to “*Student*” newsmagazine, the flagship publication of the Ukrainian Canadian Students’ Union (SUSK). For several decades, “*Student*” has been the voice of young Ukrainian Canadians. As such, we continue this tradition with our first issue for the 2014-2015 academic year.

Over the summer months, SUSKites have been busy with Maidan-related initiatives, including various Twitter storms and fundraisers for humanitarian aid for Ukraine. The Maidan revolution has created both extraordinary opportunities and challenges for SUSK, and we hope to continue playing an active role in advocating on behalf of Ukraine in Canada.

As we begin the academic year this fall, the SUSK National Executive has been working to establish relationships with its member Ukrainian Students’ Organizations across the country as well as preparing various initiatives for the upcoming year. SUSK Executive Vice-President Cassian Soltykevych and I had the pleasure of meeting with student members of the Ukrainian Students’ Association at the University of Saskatchewan this fall and warmly welcome them to the SUSK family.

A key priority for the coming year will be to see the Ukrainian Canadian Congress Ukrainian Dragons project through to completion by hosting a national series of networking events in major cities across Canada and establishing a full-time National Coordinator position in Ottawa. We look forward to building the Ukrainian Canadian student movement by strengthening SUSK’s identity and recognition, organizational continuity, and financial sustainability through these initiatives.

Over six decades, SUSK has played an integral role in the Ukrainian Canadian community by engaging youth and fostering their development for future positions in both their career and community. SUSK inspires and cultivates our future Ukrainian





Canadian leadership: it fosters pride and a sense of identity, and provides young people with opportunities for self-development and growth. As such, I encourage all Ukrainian Canadian students to connect with and become involved in SUSK and wish you all the best for the 2014-2015 academic year.

З повагою – Regards,

Christine Czoli  
SUSK President

### Ukraine is in pain. World, Help!

Alarm is growing in West Ukraine and the capital city of Kyiv over Russia's role in Eastern Ukraine. But what is Russian President, Vladimir Putin, trying to achieve? It is the XXI century and sadly not everyone realises that Putin is a real danger- not only to Ukraine but to Europe as a whole. It could be the case that the denials of Russian military involvement in the rest of Ukraine may also soon be seen as having served their purpose.

Russian communities only began to learn of the scale and nature of the conflict when soldiers started arriving home dead or injured. They see an entirely different picture in their own media to what is actually happening in real life in Ukraine. The statements that the Russian soldiers in eastern Ukraine are "volunteers" and "on leave" both add a layer of implausible deniability, and get around Russia's own constitutional and legal safeguards against sending servicemen abroad without the proper authority.

First they took over Crimea and of course, it was not enough. It all started with the sudden appearance of armed men in green uniforms, which little by little led to Russian annexation, new flags, new passports - and Western sanctions.

For a really long time world saw clashes in Ukraine as civil war. Nobody wanted to say out loud that this is a war with Russia. So is the Russian military helping the rebels? The answer will be yes. However, the Kremlin has repeatedly denied allegations by the government in Kiev and the West that it is supplying troops and sophisticated military hardware to the rebels.



War in eastern Ukraine led to a huge human cost. At least 2,119 people had been killed and 5,043 wounded since mid-April. 951 civilians have been killed in Donetsk region alone on August 20. 155,800 people have fled elsewhere in Ukraine while at least 188,000 have gone to Russia.

Here is a timeline to help you follow the events in Ukraine in chronological order:

### April 2014:

- After Putin absorbed Ukrainian Crimea into Russian federation, pro-Russian protesters occupy government buildings in the eastern Ukrainian cities of Donetsk, Luhansk and Kharkiv, calling for a referendum on independence. The amount of Russian "volunteers" and armoured cars start to increase on the eastern territory of Ukraine.

### May 2014:

- Pro-Russians take over the regional prosecutor's office in eastern Donetsk.
- Clashes in the Black Sea city of Odessa leave at least 42 people dead, most of them pro-Russian activists killed when a building they had barricaded themselves inside caught fire.
- Putin describes Ukraine's presidential elections scheduled for 25 May as a move "in the right direction".
- Pro-Russian separatists in Donetsk and Luhansk declare independence after referendums which were not recognised by Kiev or the West.
- Putin says he has ordered troops near Ukraine's border to withdraw, but Nato says there is no sign they have pulled back.
- Ukraine holds presidential election but most polling stations in east remain closed. President-elect Petro Poroshenko vows to bring "peace to a united and free Ukraine".
- Pro-Russian rebels shoot down a military helicopter near Sloviansk, killing 14 people including a general.

### June 2014:

- NATO pledges to bolster its defence capabilities in response to Russian actions in Ukraine.



- Petro Poroshenko, sworn in on 7 June, orders the creation of humanitarian corridors so civilians can flee areas of east Ukraine hit by conflict.
- Ukraine says three Russian tanks have entered rebel areas in the east. Russia denies the allegations.
- Government troops win back the port city of Mariupol after heavy fighting.
- President Poroshenko declares a week-long truce which falls apart a week after.
- The EU signs an association agreement with Ukraine in what President Petro Poroshenko describes as the most important day in the country's history since independence in 1991.

### July 2014:

- Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 from Amsterdam is shot down near the village of Grabove in rebel-held territory close to the border with Russia. A total of 298 people are killed including 80 children. Western nations said the plane was hit by a Russian-supplied SA-11 missile fired by rebels.
- The first remains of victims of the MH17 disaster are moved by train to Kharkiv. Two days later two planes carrying bodies arrives in the Netherlands.
- The EU and US announce new sanctions against Russia with focus on oil sector, defence equipment and sensitive technologies.

### August 2014:

- Ukrainian forces have virtually surrounded the city of Luhansk. The city's supplies of power and water supplies run low and communications are down.
- More than 1,000 civilians are fleeing the conflict zone every day.
- Russian President Vladimir Putin hits back against Western sanctions, with a "full embargo" on fruit, vegetables, meat, fish, milk and dairy imports.
- A convoy of refugees from the Luhansk area is hit by rockets leaving women and children dead. Rebels deny carrying out the attack.
- A convoy-"Trojan horse" of more than 100 Russian lorries enters Ukraine without permission, carrying what Russia says is humanitarian aid for the besieged city of Luhansk.
- President Vladimir Putin meets Poroshenko in Belarus, in their first direct talks since early June.

### September 2014:





- 700 of Ukrainian men have been taken prisoner as pro-Russian rebels advance in the east.
- Russia is to alter its military strategy as a result of the Ukraine crisis and NATO's presence in eastern Europe
- Ukraine and pro-Russian rebels in the east sign a truce deal to end almost five months of fighting.

It has been 23 years since Ukrainian parliament declared independence from USSR and we still fight for our independence. We are strong, patriotic country and now that everybody is aware of what is actually happening in Ukraine, there is no doubt that we will win this fight. Truth will prevail! **Slava Ukraini! Heroiam Slava!**

Olha Hyzha

Vice President External at University of Alberta

### Let Us Not Lose Hope for Ukraine

In my mind, Ukraine reminds me of a Cossack from the Ukrainian folk song *The Cossack was riding over the Danube*. Just like the Cossack, who has to leave his love behind and be on his way to the battlefield, Ukraine took an uncharted path to the future. We do not know when the journey would end. There are many obstacles lying ahead. However, it is still too early to lose hope, for this would only be a brief moment in the long history of Ukraine's effort to become a truly democratic state where people can live with dignity.

The Euromaidan, or the "Revolution of Dignity," showed Ukrainians' desire to embark from the status quo, where cronyism, corruption and poor governance plagued the everyday lives of Ukrainian people. Throughout the three months at the Maidan, Ukrainians showed an amazing resilience. These were ordinary people who were sick of the *Ancien Régime* of Viktor Yanukovych and the oligarchs. They refused to step back when the riot police stormed the Maidan. Even when the police snipers were shooting at them, the people held the ground.

Unfortunately, it is still too early to romanticize Ukraine's revolution. Make no mistake; Ukraine is at war. What has started from a small peaceful demonstration organized by a small number of college students has become a nation-wide pro-



democracy revolution. And now, it has become a global conflict that sacrificed thousands of lives.

Russia has once again demonstrated its imperialistic ambition without even bother hiding it. The illegal annexation of the Crimea was an outright violation of Ukraine's sovereignty. Furthermore, the separatist movement in eastern Ukraine has grown into a war that has resulted the loss of thousands of lives on both Ukraine and Russia. All of this would have not been necessary if Putin and his associates had chosen to drag the world into their alternate reality. He and his associates have purposefully created a situation where Russians in Ukraine appears to be in danger of extermination under what they call it as "Kyiv fascist junta."

Both Ukrainians and non-Ukrainians who deeply care for Ukraine knows that this is not true. There may have been some discontent among the Ukrainophile and Russophile Ukrainians in the election or soccer game in the past. However, there has been a mutual agreement that both side belongs to Ukrainian statehood since the independence. A recent case of the anti-war protest in Mariupol in September where hundreds of Ukrainian citizens formed a human chain to show their support for Ukraine's sovereignty and peace supports the claim. We must remember that what has jeopardized the relationship between two groups is Putin's alternate reality, which has made people drift into its ocean of lies.

The challenge that faces Ukraine may appears as insurmountable, which is why I wanted to briefly discuss on France's long years of struggle for democracy. France did not become one of the world's most democratic state in a day. The seed of French democracy was sowed on July 14<sup>th</sup>, 1789 when the people revolted against the *Ancien Régime* of Bourbon dynasty. However, the seed took many years to grow into the majestic tree that we see today. It faced challenges from both home and abroad. There was a moment of chaos where individuals like Robespierre sought to maintain order through the Reign of Terror, utilizing brute force as means to the end. Soon, the European monarchs declared war on France to extinguish the fires of revolution. We also saw the return of monarchy under Napoleon Bonaparte, a man who brought the whole country to a continental war for his ambition.

Just like France in 1798, Ukraine's popular democracy was born only in last November. There were early attempts like the Orange Revolution in 2004. However,





the leaders of the Orange Revolution had failed to fulfill Ukrainians' expectations and the *Ancien Régime* of oligarchs and corrupt politicians remained intact. Perhaps it is true that a free nation cannot be built without sacrifice. Thomas Jefferson once said there are times when the tree of liberty must be refreshed with the bloods of patriots and tyrants. I do not wish to glorify the sacrifice of a human life. However, history has shown that the old order will stay in place unless the people are willing to confront them, even if they have to risk their lives.

It is praiseworthy that Ukraine made a bold move to disembark from the imperialist and communist legacy which has bred the *Ancien Régime* that they had just destroyed. Ukraine's effort is truly remarkable in a time when many people are rather willing to stay with the status quo or bring back the evil relics of past into our time.

However, the revolution and the war is only the beginning of Ukraine's long journey for democracy. This may take years, decades, or centuries. It is a process that would require dedication and sacrifice of not just Ukrainians, but the good and willful minded people of the world who genuinely cares for a better Ukraine, where people can live with dignity. Let us not lose hope for Ukraine. Let us take pride in being a part of this great moment of history.

Let us not lose hope for Ukraine.

Elliot Cho. Political Studies (Undergraduate)  
University of Saskatchewan

### WWI Internment Operations

In the late nineteenth century, thousands of Eastern Europeans were encouraged to make the trip to Canada, a land of hope and prosperity. What they didn't know was that after the First World War begun, many would be labeled as "enemy aliens" and sent to internment camps across Canada. Thousands of innocent newcomers were interned and subject to labour work constructing roads and clearing land.

Last year, The Government of Canada opened an exhibit at the Cave and Basin National Historic Site in Banff National Park to increase awareness about Canada's





First World War internment operations. I visited the exhibit last year and was impressed with the detail and amount of work that went into the exhibit. It was very well outlined, explained a great deal about the various camps and what materials the internees had to work with. It also spoke about the construction work that the internees did and how it helped the area around Banff, especially with the construction of the Banff - Lake Louise highway. There were posters showing the Canadian governments call to enlist in the army as well as posters that were used to entice Europeans to come and settle Canada.



While the exhibit was well done and explained the events quite clearly, the lack of signage to find the exhibit was disappointing. When you arrive at Cave and Basin, there are no signs to help guide you to the building, and even when you do find the smaller sized exhibit, it does not clearly indicate what is inside. Its overall presentation from the outside is disheartening as compared to the incredible work done on the inside.

I highly recommend every person, Ukrainians and non-Ukrainians alike, go visit this exhibit. It's a dark piece of Canadian history and many people never knew the hardships that were felt by many newcomers in a foreign land.



Cassian Soltykevych  
University of Alberta



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## A Master's Exchange like No Other

I have no idea how I managed to steamroll through my Bachelor's degree in 4 years, while studying in both Amsterdam and Berlin and taking a semester off to work on a campaign. Looking back now, it is as though I've fallen asleep sometime after frosh week and woken up on graduation day. The pinch came from Michele Jean, who graciously greeted me, with a kind statement, along the lines of how difficult it must have been to earn whatever the distinction I was receiving. It was a glory short lived, bound to always being overshadowed, in my memory by my uncalled, though honest response, that it really wasn't that difficult at all. Off with the Bachelor's and on with the Master's I went, somehow steamrolling into a commitment I had given little consideration, yet not as little of a consideration, as I gave to the decision to spend a year of my Master's on an exchange in Russia.

To my surprise, Russia had initially enchanted and fascinated me. To my disappointed, it was but a short-lived façade that quickly withered, exposing me to a reality so raw, so disenchanting...

The summer days have long faded and with them, the G20 smokescreen that conveniently cast a shadow on Russia's deeply gloomy reality. I was growing increasingly accustomed to 4pm dusks and a 10am dawns and consequentially, increased exposure to state run airways and their apocalyptic rhetoric. The supposed eclipse of Russia's reemergence and its seemingly unrivaled grace, grandiosity and glamour consumed me. I watched many alleged assaults on Russia's newly manifested glory. I watched its diplomat arrested in The Hague, sailors assaulted by Greenpeace and its Olympic toilets trivialized the world over. This was all before Kyiv's junta government began to hijack the headlines and cater in the caliber of propaganda, even my strengthened immunity couldn't tolerate.

It many ways, it was the university that kept my sanity intact. In an ode to my professor behind closed, I confessed that her moderate classes attest to the fact that there is hope for Russia. The pessimism in her response had chilled me to the bones and projected a sentiment I can't quite put in words. Seasons were changing and the political conundrum was going from bad to worse in seconds in seemed. My grandmother stopped crying and telling me her Maidan stories over the phone. She simply could no longer cry, or talk to me much. It was the same disheartening story





though, that frankly speaking, I could no longer bear. I hadn't found my way to Ukraine until mid-March and after my return from Siberia. My books were my sanctuary and a paper I've written on a topic vastly irrelevant to my primary research, served as my get out of jail card. It was a university paper, like many others I've written, that paved my way some 200km away from the polar circle and in the inner circle of Russia's secluded and serene city, once barred and inaccessible even to other Soviets. Yakutia was the second formerly "closed off," Soviet city in Russia I had explored. The first one hosts Russia's biggest nuclear station and research facility, thus remaining inaccessible to foreigners. I ended up in both of them by a very unlikely fluke and will gladly recall them as places I wouldn't ever try to see again.

I think I'll remember Yakutia fondly overall, as it wasn't an experience overshadowed by rampant media rhetoric and faulty sensationalism that had literally drove me crazier by the minute. Ironically, this is only because most people there still do not own a TV, or consistent Internet for that matter. In fact, they are effectively shut off from everyday reality.

Yakutia was the ultimate classroom and the radiant source of preserved Soviet legacy I've so aggressively pursued, as the focal point of my Master's thesis. I had encountered a seemingly unlikely character in Yakutia. It was Joseph Stalin. To be sure, the sculpture was made so ominous not only by its Siberian quarters, but by its inception in 2006... Yakutia was a classroom that redefined the term monopoly, with Russia's diamond industry as the primary case at point. But it wasn't Mr. Stalin or the diamonds that occupied my thoughts en route back to St. Petersburg. It wasn't even Ukraine, for once. It was the daunting realization how little progress Russia's made. Outside of Moscow and St. Petersburg and beyond the vale, the imperial symbols and imported elitisms, Russia was but a broke, corrupt and rotting kleptocracy. It eats away at its people and paves a façade at the expenses of real progress. My flight back to Canada from St. Petersburg, in late April stirred up similar emotions and grave, deep pity for everyone I was leaving behind, including those, who had brought me to tears picking my brain on the crisis in Ukraine. Startlingly contrasting, were my emotions en route back to Canada, from the election observation mission in Ukraine, less than a month later. I saw a country and people willing to compromise everything for a mere shot at a better tomorrow. Everyone's emotions and hopes ran high in Ukraine. I witnessed a sense of unwavering determination and patriotism, so



prevalent and so contagious. I had left Ukraine with the certainty of knowing that a country with a solid vision and a fierce hope is bound to prevail and rise above it all. I had left Russia with the realization that a vain disguise of a glorifying image is what sustains it. Worse yet, that image, that Potemkin vale, is what is imposed on it, as an empty and failed, unifying, national idea.

So accustomed to serenity, hollow silence and solitude of my St. Petersburg quarters I made peace with my journey's ending and prepared for my pre-departure prayer among the antique surroundings that have not been moved or replaced for decades. Just how much suffering they have seen; given the daunting history of St. Petersburg and how much more of that are they are bound to see in the years to come... I prayed for the grandmas and grandpas, whose pensions could barely sustain their basic living. I prayed for the younger generations, who are deprived of basic liberties we take for granted. I prayed for everyone's sense, sensibility and sanity. I prayed for peace, hope and dignity of those I've never liked, cared to get to know or had ever missed since.

Thinking back to it now, I wouldn't have given up that experience for anything else, despite its emotional imprint. No Profs, lectures or conferences could have given me that exposure I've experienced first hand. I've learned most about Russia via the lens it so blatantly and aggressively imposed on Ukraine. I got to know the real Russia; I got to see Russia beyond its self-propagated grandeur and right through to its desperate hollowness.

Kate Ivanchenko  
Carleton University

### Українська гімназія у Монреалі

*"Учитесь, читайте, чужого навчайтесь і свого не цурайтесь".* Саме словами видатного українського письменника Тараса Шевченка відкрилися двері української гімназії у Монреалі у суботу, 4-го жовтня. Діти віком від 4 до 16 років, батьки, вчителі та адміністрація з радістю розпочали перший навчальний день у новій суботній школі. Цей день запам'ятається їм усім



назавжди, адже у Монреалі це перша суботня школа сучасного типу. Адміністрація з нетерпінням чекає моменту коли учні та батьки побачать результати їхньої клопіткої роботи над школою. Учні знервовані, але також зацікавленні зустріти нових друзів. Батьки раді, що їхні діти мають можливість підтримувати знання про рідну Батьківщину. Українська гімназія Монреала це перша українська школи у Монреалі де викладається як мова, література і історія, та й точні науки. Курси точних та природничих наук викладаються у старшій школі та намагаються наслідувати навчальні програми шкіл Квебеку, дозволяючи учням закріпити нові теми рідною мовою, а також отримати консультацію вчителя для опрацювання необхідного матеріалу та виконання домашніх робіт.

Одна з найбільших проблем з якою зіткаються українські школи сучасного типу закордоном це відсутність української державної програми по викладанню мови, літератури та історії закордоном. Через це кожна школа має розробляти свою програму та починати з самого початку самостійно. Російські та польські школи такої проблеми немає адже їхні держави забезпечують програми для суботніх шкіл. В українській гімназії Монреала всі програми авторські- створенні вчителями, дотримуючись всіх сучасних стандартів навчання.

Адміністрація школи завжди шукає творчих людей і заохочує приєднатися до колективу. З питаннями та пропозиціями звертайтеся на [ukrhimnasiya@gmail.com](mailto:ukrhimnasiya@gmail.com) або відвідайте сторінку у Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Українська-гімназія-у-Монреалі>)

Darya Naumova  
McGill University



**ACT NOW!  
VOTE FOR UKRAINE!  
HOW TO VOTE IN CANADA  
(TORONTO & OTTAWA)**

**FOR UKRAINIAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS ON OCTOBER 26, 2014**

1. By October 18, 2014 submit a request to verify if you are included in the list of voters by doing either of the following:
  - 1.1. On the State Registry of Voters web-site <http://bit.ly/1nX6crW>, by creating a personal cabinet or:
  - 1.2. if in Ottawa, by calling the Embassy of Ukraine in Canada by phone 613-230-8015, and if in Toronto by calling the Consulate General of Ukraine in Canada by phone 416-763-3114 or:
  - 1.3. by email: [consul@ukremb.ca](mailto:consul@ukremb.ca)
2. Register as a voter in Ottawa or Toronto, check Embassy of Ukraine in Canada or Consulate General of Ukraine in Canada web-sites for updates <http://bit.ly/1tsc7l8> or <http://toronto.mfa.gov.ua/en> respectively
3. On 26 October 2014, between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., arrive at 310 Somerset St. West (if you are in Ottawa), or arrive at 2275 Lakeshore Blvd. West, Suite #301 (if you are in Toronto), in order to vote.

In March 2014, Iuliia Zubrytska and Dr. Markian Shulakewych interviewed Maryana Zayats (Winnipeg, Canada), focusing on civil society democratic engagement in the upcoming Ukrainian Presidential elections, first round voting May 25, 2014, and possible second round voting June 15, 2014, and hopefully soon to be scheduled Ukrainian Parliamentary elections, and what Canada, Ukrainian diaspora and Ukrainian citizens can do to enhance, facilitate and realize the voting process.

In light of Russia's interim illegal use of force and aggressive annexation of Crimea, violence by pro-Russian separatists in Eastern Ukraine, and Ukraine's further threatened loss of territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence, much more robust and concrete measures (than those covered in this interview) from Ukraine and Western democracies are immediately necessary to ensure Ukraine's survival.



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Maryana Zayats, former President of the University of Manitoba Ukrainian Students Association, Aspers School of Business graduate, did a commendable effort by coming all the way from Winnipeg to Ottawa, in order to cast her vote at the Ukrainian Embassy in Canada, together with other members of her student organisation, in the previous 2010 Ukrainian Presidential elections.

*What was your motivation to vote?*

First of all, I am owing a lot to my dear grandfather Yosyp whose family survived Stalin's inhuman atrocities, and whose poems and words of wisdom inspire me in my everyday decisions. So it came as no surprise to me as a Ukrainian citizen to fully support the Orange revolution, and now the Euromaidan movement.

*Was it easy for you to fly over half of a continent, 2300 kilometres - from the heart of the continent (Winnipeg) to Canada's capital (Ottawa) - in order to do the voting?*

Actually we booked our tickets 2 weeks ahead of time. As a result, we arrived in Ottawa first thing in the morning on voting day, and our departure time from Ottawa was 11 PM on the same date.

*So I guess that you had plenty of time to complete your voting mission?*

Definitely! We arrived at the Ukrainian Embassy, 310 Somerset Street in Ottawa just after 8 AM and voted in a split second.

*What is the procedure like? Did you experience any difficulties with the process?*





No, not at all. Everything went smoothly, far more smoothly than we would expect. We were particularly concerned that we were not listed in the Voters' Register. However, after we found ourselves at the premises of the Ukrainian Embassy, we were invited to get our names on the registry list, so that we could go on with obtaining and casting the voting ballot. Secondly, there were no lines of people, and we were free and relaxed to vote at our leisure. The voting procedure was clear.

*Did you pay anything for this voting procedure?*

No, the process is completely free from any fees whatsoever and it does not imply any other financial or taxation consequences. On the contrary, we received a bonus on that day - our picture was posted on the official web-site of the Ukrainian Embassy in Canada.

*In your opinion, what improvements are worth introducing into the voting procedure?*

As I am aware, the key problem for Ukrainians voting abroad is travel distance to the nearest voting poll. Ukrainian people living abroad should be able to vote at many Ukrainian churches, schools, and Ukrainian cultural centres, close to their residence.

*Ukrainian Canadian diaspora has taken a lead in monitoring numerous prior elections in Ukraine. What more can be done, in your opinion?*

I appreciate that effort very much. Ukrainian citizens should be encouraged to vote and be given a reasonable opportunity to do so.



*Was it affordable for you as a student to fly down to Ottawa from Winnipeg?*

This was definitely an expense, but it was worth every penny. In the end, we managed to find donors and sponsors among Ukrainian Canadian organizations – Shevchenko foundation, for example – who assisted in covering our expenses in large part. My parents also helped cover a portion of the cost.

*Wouldn't it have been easier for you just to vocalize your patriotic ideas in Winnipeg, without voter participation in elections?*

I found voting very beneficial because I felt it was very important to have my voice heard and counted. In my case, I was able to see the capital of Canada, the beautiful city of Ottawa.

Ukrainian citizens' voter turnout in global diaspora in multiple previous Ukrainian Presidential and Parliamentary elections was abysmal, most recently in October 2012 Ukrainian Parliamentary elections.

For example in Canada with thousands of eligible Ukrainian citizens voters, only less than two hundred persons voted at the Ukrainian Embassy in Ottawa, with voter turnout less than 3%! In Europe millions of eligible Ukrainian citizens simply do not vote.

*The reasons for this are multifactorial, including voter apathy. In the context of new hope with Euromaidan and new transitional government, how can effective global Ukrainian citizens' voter turnout be markedly increased?*

Ukrainian Canadian organizations and individuals helped me personally to realize my voter participation. So do not lose your chance to vote, while you are still holding



this unique bond with your country – citizenship of Ukraine. Please vote and persuade all of your family members and friends living in Ukraine and residing abroad – in Europe, USA, and Canada – to do so!

Please do not turn a blind eye to the land where you are from.

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What would be Ukrainian citizens' explanation for why many eligible voters were previously so disengaged? Is it that Ukrainian citizens possessed the rosy view that everything was already perfect in Ukraine and hence were 100 percent satisfied with the status quo? Or is it that Ukrainian citizens had given up hope for even trying to make a difference through the ballot box? What a grim outlook of both extremes... The hope is that recent dramatic Maidan events have signaled new change within each Ukrainian citizen.

Well-run election is one in which all eligible voters can easily participate, and in which only eligible voters can cast ballots, which are counted accurately and fairly. Maintaining this convenience and integrity through all the administrative phases of each election – registration, voting, counting the ballots and reporting the outcome – ensures a functioning democracy.

Canada and western democracies have stepped up previously to assist Ukraine with significant election observation missions, with more planned. What next?

One person, one vote. Every vote counts and every vote matters. Voting means that there is public interest in trust more generally, as well as goodwill that can spur citizen engagement in any number of community issues. Voter participation matters, as not





only hot-button topics that garner headlines are important, but also more mundane civic affairs engagement builds a country. Over time, the citizenry's prevailing opinions and engagement influence the rules, standards, and laws that determine so many aspects of our daily lives.

For the reasons above, Maryana's personal experience is an invaluable practical lesson for all of us going forward in building Ukraine's civil society. Every Ukrainian citizen, regardless of his/her place of residence is an integral part of Ukrainian people who have to be accountable before their countrymen and exercise their privilege and responsibility to vote. Voting in Ukrainian elections is the minimum of what can be done in the spirit of honoring the memories of those who sacrificed their lives on Maidan for this opportunity. Millions of Ukrainian citizens around the globe must have their voice heard at this pivotal moment in Ukraine's history, in upcoming Presidential elections scheduled for May 25, 2014, and June 15, 2014, and further Parliamentary and Municipal elections in Ukraine, in order to ensure good governance and blossoming of civil society in Ukraine for today and future generations.

Ukrainian World Congress and constituent organizations should consider further increasing broad based effective voter participation education campaigns as a crucial positive means to build civil society in Ukraine, together with extensive facilitation and marked expansion of current voting opportunities worldwide by the transitional Ukrainian government authorities, and markedly increased direct voter participation globally. Ukrainian Canadian diaspora and its organizations are well positioned to



lead by example for countries such as Italy, Spain, Portugal, Germany, USA etc., with millions of Ukrainian citizens eligible to vote around the world.

These steps, coupled with better management by election officials from Ukraine, should boost Ukrainian citizens' engagement in the elections. With all of these groups effectively collaborating around upcoming Ukraine's election process, there will be an opportunity for accelerating Ukraine to a new level of civil society development emphasizing combating corruption, strengthening rule of law, democracy, human rights standards, freedom, on the chosen path to Ukraine's Eurointegration course. Now there is a unique chance for each and every one to improve Ukraine itself. A government of the people, for the people, works best when people show up to vote.

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### Ryerson Boat Cruise Zabava

On the evening of Saturday September 27, the Ukrainian Students' Club at Ryerson hosted our first ever Zabava Dinner & Cruise. One of our biggest challenges we faced when promoting this event was when people would tell us it was going to be cold and might rain. Luckily for us they were wrong, as it was a beautiful, sunny day with a very faint breeze - we couldn't have asked for more perfect weather. In fact,





when we showed up to start setting up the boat, the first thing we saw was the band on the top deck of the boat, Hloptsi Z Mista, shirtless, warming up their pipes & instruments at the foot of Queens' Quay.

Needless to say, the event attracted a diverse crowd of 200 people – students, recent graduates, parents, businessmen and professionals. The Empress of Canada offered a great layout – we had the buffets and dining set up on the lower and middle deck, and the band and dance floor on the top deck. With a bar on a every deck and a 360° view of Lake Ontario & Toronto, it was a really unique and engaging setting for the 4 hour duration of the cruise. Everyone had a great time, we received tons of positive feedback and we can't wait to do it again next year.

The idea for the Cruise first surfaced over a year ago and the original motive behind was to simply throw an outdoor zabava with great views, food, and dancing. When we actually started planning the cruise was around the same time that Euromaidan began. As the situation in Ukraine got progressively worse and as we gathered more information about how we were going to do this cruise, it became apparent that this would be a really good opportunity to raise some money to raise some money for Ukrainian initiatives locally and internationally – so we did.

As the war in Ukraine continues, it is important to our club that we as Ukrainian-Canadians contribute to the support of our soldiers, doctors, and people through the form of humanitarian aid. On October 15<sup>th</sup> USC Ryerson donated \$1200 to Ukraine through the Ukrainian Canadian Congress Toronto Branch, who is very heavily affiliated with Euromaidan Canada. We have a lot of respect for these 2 organizations as they are the primary organizers of protests, rallies, and fundraisers in Toronto and to date have raised over \$200,000 for initiatives in Ukraine. They are



also very well connected with people who personally deliver the goods to their destination - thereby avoiding the need for middle men and minimizing the possibility of corruption. We wanted to ensure the funds we raised would go to where they were needed most and the funds will go towards defensive materials for volunteer battalions(helmets, bullet proof vests, binoculars) and aid for injured volunteers and soldiers.

Next week we will present the St. Elias Church Re-Building Fund with a donation of \$500. The Church was a staple in our local Ukrainian community and we are eager to help with the re-build, following the disastrous fire earlier this year.

What did we learn from this initiative? First, we realized very quickly that there were very many people who were willing to help us once they learned what we were trying to accomplish. We received financial sponsorship from Buduchnist Credit Union and Ukrainian Credit Union Limited and media sponsorship from Kontakt TV. After we got the Empress of Canada, Baby Point Lounge, and Hloptsi z-Mista on board, people were buzzing about the event and attendance was great. Next, we saw that it was possible to have a good time while doing something good. The event was a lot of fun, but the fact that we were able to donate a significant amount of money to 2 important causes was the best part. Finally, we learned that doing something new and thinking big produced big results. Although it was a lot of work to research, plan, and execute an event we had never done before, it was a very rewarding experience at the end of the day. We are very happy and proud that we were able to do something great for our club, our community, and Ukraine.



Michael Fik  
Ryerson University



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