



## IEC Inaugural Meeting

# Intergovernmental Economic Commission to Spur Private Ventures

The Intergovernmental Economic Commission (IEC) is the centrepiece of the Economic Cooperation Agreement which was signed back on October 24, 1994, in Ottawa. The Agreement was intended to foster and encourage business and trade cooperation and established a range of initiatives that each government was encouraged to undertake. The inaugural meeting of the IEC finally took place in Kyiv two years later, during the October Trade Mission.

The most immediate goals of the IEC are to identify specific projects and sectors of interest for cooperation, and to encourage Canadian and Ukrainian business communities in their efforts to develop joint enterprises.

The IEC is also designed to monitor progress and provide direction, and provide a forum to implement the principles of Canada-Ukraine economic cooperation. The IEC's core activities are expected to be entrusted to working groups which should include the business community. The Commission is to be chaired on a sequential basis, and the delegations are to be headed by a minister or designate.

The Canadian government believes that the IEC will help build effective business relations between Canada and Ukraine. The IEC will identify impediments to these business relations and develop solutions, while stimulating new interest from non-traditional participants. The IEC is intended to support the process of economic reform and to strengthen Ukraine's economy.



YURY KOZAKOV

*Smiles and signatures.*

Canadian participation in the IEC is based on the belief that the IEC must be focused, with specific objectives set at a realistic level, and that the private sector must be the principal participants.

In addressing the inaugural meeting of the IEC in Kyiv, Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy emphasized, "We must expand and develop with the private sectors especially... That is where real partnerships will become possible."

From an international and government perspective, Ukraine is increasingly being recognized as key to peace and security in Europe, business is primarily driven by self-interest. Thus, despite Canada's substantial technical cooperation program with Ukraine, Canadian business people have been much more cautious in their dealings with Ukraine. The bottom line is that the Canadian government does not trade; Canadian companies do.



*IEC Session.*