



With the end of confrontation in Europe, regional cooperation gains in importance. The pan-European security system may and should be strengthened, using such structures as the CSCE, North Atlantic Cooperation Council, NATO, and WEU. So far Ukraine has signed an agreement with the Commission of the European Union, and has been cooperating with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and the World Bank. Historically, countries of Central and Eastern Europe have been approximately in the same condition. Ukraine initiated the idea of the creation of a stability and security zone in this area. The proposal resembles the ideas of President Walensa of Poland and Prime Minister Balladure of France. Recently President Kravchuk proposed measures of confidence-building and reduction of military activity in the Black Sea area. Being entangled into a net of residual problems at home, Ukraine might not be as visible on the world scene as one might hope. Nevertheless, in the UN Ukraine has been doing her utmost to support all efforts for peaceful solution of conflicts. During the very first months of her independent existence, Ukraine sent a battalion of peace-keepers to Bosnia. We support efforts of preventive diplomacy, and Ukraine has been instrumental in ensuring UN sanctions on the Danube river. Our firm support of the campaign against apartheid and for a just durable solution in Middle East has made a name for Ukraine in Africa. Thus, though preoccupied with her inner problems, Ukraine wants to play a positive role in Europe and in the world. Ukraine is striving for comprehensive cooperation with the EU and for gradual integration into the all-European economic space. In general, to the best of our ability we are trying to be helpful in coping with global problems like the protection of the environment, disarmament - and nuclear disarmament applies to US and Russian nuclear arms as well, because they do not smell like ice-cream either - health care, natural disaster relief, refugee assistance, drug control, international terrorism, and so forth. Finally, one of the priorities of Ukraine's foreign service is the mobilization of international assistance to tackle the adverse consequences of the Chernobyl catastrophe.

OUR VISION OF THE UKRAINIAN DIASPORA

And now a few words about our vision of the Ukrainian diaspora. Ukraine opted for independence, convinced by a century-old policy of Russification. This option was not only the act of politicians; it was also a natural behaviour of an endangered nation concerned with self-preservation. Ukraine is the historic motherland of the Ukrainian language and culture. In accordance with internationally recognized human rights standards, the Ukrainian state is concerned about the rights and interests of Ukrainians, and of her former citizens now living abroad. To this end, she will assist in the development of cultural and social contacts. Our law on languages provides for special agreements with other countries in this domain. The declaration on minorities' rights which was concluded between Ukraine and Hungary, was only the first step in this direction. Ukraine feels she has obligations for the national, cultural, educational, spiritual, linguistic needs of ethnic Ukrainians living abroad. The protection of Ukrainians' rights in the CIS States is one of the main concerns for Ukrainian foreign policy. But it has nothing to do with mixing into the domestic affairs of other states. Ukrainians living, let us say, in Canada, or Hungarians living in Ukraine, are equal citizens of their respective states and help to unite our countries, to bring about stable bounds of cooperation and friendship.

Being hard-working and industrious, and exemplary Canadian citizens, members of the Ukrainian community here made good names for themselves and for

the country of their origin - Ukraine. So it is not mere coincidence that Canada, together with Poland, was the first to recognize independent Ukraine, and that the first planes with humanitarian assistance for Ukraine took off from Canadian airfields. Canada has special place in Ukraine's heart. Just as when the Berlin Wall was about to collapse, East Germany was looking in direction of West Germany, so too when the Iron Curtain was about to disappear and Ukraine was looking for a match in West, she fixed her views on Canada. We were and are thankful to this country for providing an opportunity for a decent life for a million or so of our former



L-r: Ukraine's Ambassador Victor Batyuk at a recent meeting with Canada's Foreign Minister André Ouellet

compatriots. Thanks to them both our countries, Ukraine and Canada, are bound to establish relations of friendship and special partnership. What does it all mean? To my understanding, it means ties that are better than average. It means also that the relations of our two countries will not be restricted to a certain area, but will effectively cover a wide range of human activities. I hope that in nearest future we shall sign agreements concerning principles of friendship and cooperation, trade, protection, and