

## UCCA ISSUES PRELIMINARY STATEMENT ON MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS IN UKRAINE

On October 27<sup>th</sup>, the UCCA issued the following statement:

The UCCA, the nation's largest representation of Americans of Ukrainian descent, affirms that although Ukraine's nation-wide elections of more than 10,000 mayoral positions and 160,000 members of municipal councils on October 25th were marred by some incidents, the voting process by and large was conducted in a transparent and democratic manner, complied with Ukrainian law and met international election standards. With more than 130 parties fielding candidates, the voter turnout in the local elections was between 46 and 47%, nearly equaling the 52% turnout in the 2014 parliamentary elections. Complete results are expected to be released on November 4.

For Sunday's elections, the UCCA once again organized an Election Observation Mission (EOM), continuing its record of training and accrediting international volunteers for every presidential and parliamentary election in Ukraine in its 24 years of independence, including Ukraine's very first democratic elections in 1991, as well as the largest EOM ever registered by Ukraine's Central Election Commission, with over 2400 observers in 2004.

The 2015 UCCA-EOM consisted of 72 accredited International Election Observers hailing from the United States, Germany, Poland, Belarus and Russia. Given that 1.4 million Ukrainians have been internally displaced due to Russia's military invasion, as well as the predicted complications due to the reformed election laws, our EOM teams were distributed on a priority basis throughout nine oblasts of Ukraine, including Kyiv, L'viv, Odesa, Kharkiv, Zhytomyr, Zaporizhzhya, Dnipropetrovs'k, Poltava and Rivne. The UCCA-EOM visited over 200 polling stations on Election Day, tabulating their observations using a real-time, cloud-based system pioneered by the Sterling Business School in Kyiv exclusively for the UCCA. The minor infractions noted by the UCCA-EOM included: instances of inaccurate voter rolls in a handful of precincts; voter frustration with the lack of information about candidates and voting processes; and accusations of possible "voter carouseling" in the Odesa and Zhytomyr oblasts.

Reports of the ongoing humanitarian disaster in Crimea and the Donets'k and Luhans'k Oblasts, brought upon by Russia's military invasion, continue to worsen because of the lack of an adequate response from the international community. The UCCA is very concerned by the reported cancellation of elections in cities and towns bordering the conflict zone, including the elections in Mariupol', Krasnoarmiys'k, and Svatove, and urges the Ukrainian government to move quickly and decisively to reschedule the elections in those municipalities.

The UCCA would like to extend our congratulations to the newly elected mayors and municipal councils across Ukraine, and wishes them strength in normalizing and stabilizing the situation in Ukraine for the furtherance of democracy. The UCCA stands together with the Ukrainian people in their desire for real reforms, including first and foremost an end to endemic corruption, which will ensure the further development of Ukraine's economy, democratic institutions, and Euro-integration.

*The UCCA expresses its sincere gratitude to its volunteer Election Observers and everyone who contributed to the success of this EOM - those who donated their time and personal resources to participate. Their commitment to democracy must be commended.*



## UCCA HOLDS A SERIES OF MEETINGS IN KYIV

During their short stay in Ukraine to Co-Chair the UCCA's Delegation of International Election Observers, UCCA President Tamara Olexy, and Executive VP Andrij Futey held a series of *high-level* meetings in Kyiv.

During the over one hour cordial meeting with Ukraine's Foreign Minister, Pavlo Klimkin, the UCCA discussed its Election Observer Mission, strengthening U.S.-Ukraine bilateral relations and efforts in Congress, and potential cooperation between the Ministry and the UCCA in initiating programs to strengthen local governance.



*L to R: P. Teluk; T. Olexy; Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin; A. Futey.*

The UCCA also had an opportunity to meet with U.S. Ambassador Geoffrey Pyatt, during which they discussed the recent trip to Kyiv of Penny Prizker, US Secretary of Commerce; the UCCA Election Observer Mission, U.S. military assistance to Ukraine and Ukraine's reform efforts.

Meetings were also held with Michael Lally, Executive Assistant Secretary of Europe, the Middle East and Africa at the US Department of Commerce International Trade Administration; renowned film director, Oles Yanchuk; and, Chair of the YBKP, Mychajlo Ratushnyi.

## CENTRAL EAST EUROPEAN COALITION URGES IMMEDIATE ACTION FROM CONGRESS TO SUPPORT UKRAINE

On October 29<sup>th</sup>, a letter, signed by 18 ethnic organizations, was sent to key members of Congress urging immediate assistance to Ukraine. The letter reads in part:

“...The ongoing crisis in Ukraine – its courageous efforts to reform while resisting Russian aggression and its attempts to secure a transformation to an independent, democratic, economically vibrant nation – demands immediate expansion of U.S. support. We, the undersigned, include representatives of more than 22 million Americans of Central and East European descent who firmly believe bolstering Ukraine’s security and independence is vital to ensuring Central and Eastern Europe’s security, prosperity, and freedom. We urge immediate action on a comprehensive U.S. aid package to help the people of Ukraine address priority economic, security, and humanitarian relief needs. Based on our knowledge of the situation, we believe this package should include:

- \$3 billion in economic assistance: comprising loan guarantees, direct budget support grants, or debt swaps as well as assistance to support reforms in key sectors, such as banking, judiciary, and energy, and to encourage investment in Ukraine.
- \$1 billion in military equipment and training support, including defensive lethal assistance as required by the Ukraine Freedom Support Act.
- A minimum of \$200 million in additional immediate humanitarian aid to meet the funding gap identified by the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) as Ukraine grapples with 1.5 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and over 5 million persons – including 1.7 million children – in need of immediate assistance.
- Increased resources to support independent media facilitating delivery of free media content to Russian-speakers, and empowering non-governmental actors with a proven track record to counter Russian propaganda.”

*The letter was signed by: American Center for a European Ukraine; American Hungarian Federation; American Latvian Association; Armenian Assembly of America; Belarusian-American Association; Estonian American National Council; Georgian Association in the USA; Hungarian American Coalition; Joint Baltic American National Committee; Lithuanian American Community, Inc.; Lithuanian-American Council; New International Leadership Institute; Polish American Congress; Slovak League of America; Ukrainian Congress Committee of America; US-Ukraine Business Council; US-Ukraine Foundation; and, Volya Institute for Contemporary Law and Society.*

## UCCA APPLAUDS UKRAINE’S ELECTION TO THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL

On Thursday, October 15th, Ukraine received the support of 177 out of a total of 193 countries to represent the countries of Eastern Europe on the United Nations Security Council. Ukraine’s two-year mandate will begin on January 1, 2016.

The Ukrainian Congress Committee of America congratulated the efforts of Ukraine’s diplomatic mission and thanked the world community for recognizing Ukraine for this position, only the second such appointment since the return of Ukraine’s independence.

The UCCA supports Ukraine’s initiatives at the UN to limit the use of the Security Council veto, to establish an international criminal tribunal to investigate the downing of Flight MH17, and to deploy an international peacekeeping mission in its eastern regions.

## UCCA SYRACUSE MEETS WITH LEGISLATORS

Russia’s aggression in Ukraine and Putin’s imperialist policies became the impetus for a meeting between members of Syracuse’s Ukrainian community and Members of Congress. The meeting, organized by the UCCA Syracuse Branch took place on October 16. Present at the meeting were E. Ziprich, representing Rep. John Katko and L.Nguen, representing Senator Charles Schumer. The Ukrainian community was represented by: Rev. M. Dosyak, Pastor of St. John the Baptist Ukrainian Catholic Church; Rev. N. Andrushkiw, Pastor of St. Luke’s Ukrainian Orthodox Church; O. Hrytsyk, UCCA Syracuse Branch President; H. Lisnychy, Vice-President; and Members-at-large O. Buchan and N. Duplak.

The purpose of the meeting was to inform legislators about concerns regarding Ukraine and its relations with the U.S. Mr. Hrycyk discussed the current situation in Ukraine and also extended an invitation to the legislators to participate in the upcoming November 7<sup>th</sup> unveiling of the memorial to the victims of the Holodomor. Members of the community also spoke about the Budapest Memorandum and Ukraine’s need for assistance in the form of modern weapons; the release of illegally detained Ukrainians from Russian prisons, particularly Nadiya Savchenko; the possibility of increased sanctions against Russia; the latest developments at the UN forum, and Russia’s harmful veto in the Security Council, which it uses to further its imperialist goals, as well as other concerns.

The community presented legislators with a commemorative book "Struggle - and You Will Overcome", published in 2010 on the occasion of the unveiling of the Shevchenko monument in Syracuse.