

**Activity Report  
Visit to Canada by  
FC Commission on Internal Economy and FC Administration  
May 13 - 18, 2007**

**PPF MISSION FRAMEWORK  
AND STRATEGY**

**INTENDED OUTCOMES:**

**500. Strengthened internal management practices and accountability of the Federal Assembly (FC and State Duma)**

**RELEVANT OUTPUTS:**

*500. Existing mechanisms improved and/or new mechanisms introduced to improve internal planning and financial management in the FA. Wherever possible, policies should be gender-sensitive.*

**MAY 2007 ACTIVITY CONTRIBUTING TO RESULTS:**

*One-week Federation Council visit to Ottawa to study in detail Canadian Parliament's experience in the areas of independent parliamentary budget, independent parliamentary administration, human resource management and IT support*

**CONTRIBUTION OF ACTIVITY TO CIDA PRIORITIES:**

*The activity contributed to CIDA's priority of promoting democratic development by strengthening the efficiency and responsiveness in the functioning of Russian government institutions.*

**PROGRESS TO DATE**

**CONTRIBUTION OF LATEST ACTIVITY TO RESULTS:**

Knowledge of Canadian Parliament's experience gained during the visit is now being used by the FC in the process of developing amendments to the existing legislation on the functioning of Russia's civil service, which includes parliamentary staff. The amendments will seek to increase Parliament's freedom and capacity to manage effectively its human resources without excessive influence from the executive.

The delegation also gained additional knowledge of the approaches to guaranteeing and managing Canadian Parliament's budgetary independence. This will be used in Federation Council's ongoing debate with the executive (in particular the Ministry of Finance of the Russian Federation) where the FC aims to win support for increased budgetary independence of Russia's Federal Assembly.

Canadian experience in IT and communication support to Parliament's work was also studied. This will be used in the development of standards for relevant support to Senator's offices in Moscow and Russian regions as well as in the improvement of FC's information and communication policies: reforms which are now pursued as part of the implementation of a government-wide "Electronic Russia" program.

The Federation Council has re-affirmed its strong interest in continuing cooperation with the Parliamentary Centre after the completion of the current project. Support to FCs efforts to disseminate ASP experience to regional legislatures has emerged as major area of potential future cooperation.

**RESULTS ACHIEVED BY LATEST ACTIVITY:**

*Output indicator 500. Changes developed and/or proposed to increase budget independence of FC; Number of FC Senators and staff familiarized with Canadian Parliament's experience in internal budget matters; Statements by FC leadership and Senators supporting FC independence managing its own financial, human and information resources; Plans developed and/or changes introduced to improve information management and/or document production.*

**(1) Knowledge of Canadian Parliament's experience gained during the visit is now being used by the FC in the process of developing amendments to the existing legislation on the functioning of Russia's civil service. The amendments will seek to increase Parliament's freedom and capacity to manage effectively its human resources without excessive influence from the executive. The Law "On State Civil Service in the Russian Federation"**

adopted in 2005 established unified rules for the functioning of the public service making no difference between the groups working for different branches of government, and including parliamentary staff in the public service. It is recognized within the FC that the Law does not reflect the specific status and work of parliamentary staff making the Federal Assembly dependent on the executive in terms of human resource management. Inspired by Canadian experience, where parliamentary staff is separate and independent from the public service and Parliament has full discretion over its human resource management, the FC is now developing amendments to the civil service legislation in the Russian Federation. The amendments will seek to give the Federal Assembly more freedom in developing human resource policies for all types of parliamentary employees.

**(2) Knowledge of the approaches to guaranteeing and managing Canadian Parliament's budgetary independence will be used in Federation Council's efforts to win support for increased budgetary independence of Russia's Federal Assembly.** In 2006 the FC introduced a series of proposals for legislative amendments intended to strengthen FA's budgetary independence from the executive branch. These proposals resulted in part from ASP activities and were distinctly based on Canadian Parliament's experience. While the proposals, developed by the FC Commission on Internal Economy, were strongly supported by FC Chairman Mironov they were faced with strong opposition from the executive, in particular by the Ministry of Finance that currently has the freedom to interfere in Parliament's budget process. The additional knowledge acquired by the delegation will be used to support the FC position in the ongoing debate. It would also help the FC to prepare for next eventual steps such as developing internal budgetary policies, rules and procedures in case the proposed amendments are passed.

**(3) Canadian experience in IT and communication support will be used in the development of standards for relevant support to Senator's offices in Moscow and Russian regions as well as in the improvement of FC's information and communication policies.** A substantial strengthening of IT support is currently undertaken by the FC as part of a government-wide "Electronic Russia" program. This is targeted at creating better conditions for Senator's legislative activities (access to information, tracking the status of bills), at developing standards for IT support for Senators' offices as well as at substantial improvement of the FC information policies and communication with other branches of government and the general public. The delegation was impressed by Canadian Parliament's experience and shared their intentions to use it in the abovementioned reforms.

**(4) The composition of the delegation, whose members were visiting Canada for the first time under ASP, allowed for an increased number of FC Senators and staff to be exposed to Canadian experience.** The FC has now accumulated extensive knowledge of Canadian Parliament's experience in developing parliament's own budgets, senator's budget, planning and funding work of committees, human resource management, and information and telecommunication support. Overall, 9 senators and 8 staff members, including the Chairman of the FC Internal Economy Commission and the Head of the FC Finance Department, who are playing a key role in the above mentioned reforms, are now well familiar with relevant Canadian practices.

## **FUTURE COOPERATION**

The Federation Council has re-affirmed its strong interest in continuing cooperation with the Parliamentary Centre after the completion of the current project. At the same time it is realized that the FC has accumulated sufficient knowledge in order to implement on its own reforms in the areas covered by ASP and further progress with these reforms depends predominantly on political will of the country's leadership.

Support to FCs efforts to disseminate ASP experience to regional legislatures has now emerged as major area of potential future cooperation. Recently the FC Commission on Internal economy took an initiative to assist regional parliaments in Russia to reduce their financial dependence on

regional Administrations (Ministries of Finance) and to strengthen their ability to manage their own resources. Two roundtables on the issue were organised jointly by the FC Internal Economy Commission and regional parliaments in Kostroma oblast and in Kalmyk Republic, and a third roundtable is planned for the Fall of 2007. This FC Commission initiative can be seen as an important step in broadening public debate on the issue and in strengthening buy-in for change among Russian institutions including regional parliaments and administrations. The delegation was at the opinion that engaging the FC and regional parliaments in a coordinated effort to promote the concept of financial independence and to strengthen regional parliaments' ability to manage their resources is a promising area for cooperation between the Parliamentary Centre and the FC.

**VALUE-ADDED OF PC TEAM IN ACHIEVING RESULTS:**

Resorting to expertise accumulated during many years of working experience at senior positions in the Canadian Government and Canadian Parliament's Administration, Program Director Amelita Armit and ASP Senior Advisor John McCrea provided, at the onset of the visit, overviews on the Canadian parliamentary system, and budget mechanisms and personnel policies in the Canadian Parliament. Sonja Voinovich, Program Coordinator, Eastern Europe, whose is specializing in the area of human resource management in parliament also participated in the latter. The information that was provided prepared delegation members for more focused and in-dept discussions with parliamentarians and parliamentary staff allowing for available time to be used in the most efficient way. Program Officer Ivo Balinov and Field Manager Valery Ponomarev played an important facilitating role at events and meeting held ensuring a highly productive dialogue between Canadian officials and experts and Russian partners.

**Glossary of terms:**

**ASP:** Accountability Strengthening Program  
**CRPP:** Canada-Russia Parliamentary Program  
**FA:** Federal Assembly  
**FC:** Federation Council  
**PC:** Parliamentary Centre