



**CZECH AND SLOVAK ASSOCIATION OF CANADA
L'ASSOCIATION TCHÈQUE ET SLOVAQUE DU CANADA
ČESKÉ A SLOVENSKÉ SDRUŽENÍ V KANADĚ
ČESKÉ A SLOVENSKÉ ZDRUŽENIE V KANADE**

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The Rt. Hon. Justine Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Ottawa, July 26, 2017

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

The 66th Congress of the Czech and Slovak Association of Canada took place in Edmonton. We are sending you as well as the leaders of the opposition greetings from the Congress and the resulting resolutions. We are writing to you as representatives of Czech and Slovak Canadians who came to Canada as refugees in the 20th century.

The majority of the refugees came in two waves; firstly, many came to escape persecution after the communist takeover in 1948. The communist regime ruled the country for 41 years until November 1989. The second wave came after 1968 when Czechoslovakia was occupied by Soviet troops. The occupation lasted for 22 years until 1990. Before being accepted by Canada, these refugees had to be cleared by the RCMP and also had to undergo a medical.

Both waves of refugees are grateful to Canada for the ability to use their talents in a free society. They have integrated in the Canadian way of life where they worked successfully in various occupations or professions.

The membership of the Czech and Slovak Association wishes to convey to you the following points and concerns:

1. Besides refugees who are cleared in Europe and are mostly families with children, we are alarmed by the situation where refugees who have not been cleared and who illegally cross the American-Canadian border. This situation will continue unless appropriate measures are taken. These so-called refugees are coming in from the United States which is a safe country because they believe that Canada will treat them more generously. Many of them come undocumented and therefore it is impossible to verify their past, possibly their criminal record or illegal drug activity or use of arms; the possibility that there are potential terrorists cannot be ignored.

This situation is creating a backlog which will be very difficult to tackle effectively. This is not fair to the Canadian taxpayer because we are talking about large financial commitments or to those potential refugees who are following the correct protocol.

2. Most of our community, just as 71% of Canadians does not agree with the apology and the out-of-court settlement of \$10.5 million with Omar Khadr. He was a young terrorist, Canadian born, who killed one American soldier and seriously injured another one, and we don't know how many more Canadian or American soldiers died from bombs which he assembled.

3. The planned adoption of the Islamophobic law has many opponents among Canadians because of its preferential treatment of Islam and the possibility of endangering freedom of speech. We believe that a proposal against all types of racism and all religious beliefs would be more appropriate. All religious beliefs are both physically and verbally attacked at university campuses and in public.

4. Most Canadians are against Muslim women wearing the niqab which covers up their face when serving the public and especially at swearing-in in citizenship courts. The niqab is not a religious requirement, it is humiliating for women and makes interactions with them feel impersonal. Immigration without assimilation is wrong for both Canada and the immigrant.

5. We are also very concerned about the illegal proliferation of opiates which when used by the common and inexperienced user is often addictive and as we have already seen in Canada, has led to many deaths among our young people. Your election promise of legalizing marijuana will bring about more problems. On the other hand, smoking cigarettes in public in Canada is strictly controlled. Will that be the case with marijuana? The use of drugs should be limited and permitted only when prescribed by a physician rather than for general recreational use.

6. Unemployment is at a fairly low level, GDP is satisfactory and the economy is showing good results. However, the deficit is definitely a serious problem. You promised during your election campaign that it will be \$24.1B due to expenditures on infrastructure which has not even started. The March budget talks about a deficit of \$93.3B, an increase of 287%.

7. On the other hand, we are glad that the current electoral system of first past the post (majority) will continue and which we also prefer as opposed to your electoral promise of introducing proportional representation.

8. We agree that natural gas should be distributed across Canada. We also appreciate your efforts to save the NAFTA agreement with the United States. Your naming of Chrystia Freeland as Minister of Foreign Affairs was a good choice, among other reasons because she is very familiar with problems in Russia and the Ukraine.

We hope, Mr. Prime Minister, that you and your government will note our concerns and suggestions and we look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Milo Suchma, President

cc. The Hon. Andrew Scheer, Leader of the Conservative Party of Canada