



**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
to the Bilateral Visit to Cyprus and Malta**

**Canadian Branch of the
Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)**

**Nicosia, Cyprus and Valetta, Malta
March 14-22, 2009**

Report

A delegation of the Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association visited Cyprus and Malta from March 14 to 22, 2009. Mr. Russ Hiebert, MP, Chair of the Canadian Branch led the delegation composed of: Guy André, MP; Patricia Davidson, MP; Irene Mathyssen, MP; Alexandra Mendès, MP; Yasmin Ratansi, MP, and Bev Shipley, MP. The delegation was assisted by Carol Chafe, Executive Secretary of the Branch.

The CPA Constitution encourages visits between member countries with the objective of giving parliamentarians the opportunity to trade views and to discuss matters of common interest in bilateral relations and issues within the international Commonwealth organization. As has been the case over the past few years, the Executive Committee of the Canadian Branch has noted with concern the growing sense of division within the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association regarding the future direction of the CPA. It regards the opportunity to participate in these bilateral visits as an excellent mechanism to build a consensus approach to dealing with these problems prior to the Annual Conferences. These visits also provide an excellent opportunity to meet with fellow Commonwealth parliamentarians to exchange best practices in resolving procedural and parliamentary problems and to discuss topics of mutual interest to Canadian, Cypriot and Maltese parliamentarians. These topics included: illegal trafficking of women and children; border security issues; electoral reforms and joint actions at the United Nations and the European Parliament.

On arrival in Cyprus on Sunday, March 15, the delegation was met by Ms. Marta Moszczenska, Canadian Ambassador to Romania with responsibility for Cyprus. Ms. Moszczenska provided a detailed briefing for the delegates concerning the current situation in Cyprus as well as the ongoing attempts by the United Nations to bring the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot sides together in a workable re-unified state. She noted Canada's long history in Cyprus as one of the original teams of UN peacekeepers and the continuing respect of both sides for the work of the Canadian Armed Forces. This history was a contributing factor to the humanitarian assistance provided by Cyprus during the 2006 crisis in Lebanon when 13,000 Canadians visiting or residing in Lebanon were airlifted to Cyprus for further transport to Canada. This history of cooperation continues to the present day in the provision of facilities for members of the Canadian Armed Forces returning from Afghanistan including the program of decompression prior to their return to Canada. This program facilitates the re-integration of the troops with their families, an initial diagnosis and treatment for those who might be dealing with post traumatic stress disorders related to their tours of duty in Afghanistan and their re-adjustment to life outside a war zone.

High Commissioner Moszczenka also provided the delegates with a briefing on the position of Cyprus on several European Union (EU) issues vis-à-vis their relations with Canada including: the new regulations governing import of seal products from Canada; the vacancy on the UN Security Council and the three candidates (Canada, Portugal and Germany); the European Union-Canada Trade Agreement and implementation of the Open Skies Agreement to permit direct flights between Cyprus and Canada. She

also noted the perceived involvement of Russian immigrants in Cyprus with the illegal drug trade; money laundering and human trafficking. The briefing provided the delegates with a better understanding to the actual situation facing Cyprus and the fallout of its membership within the EU.

On Monday, March 16th the delegation met with Mr. Taye-Brook Zerihoun, the Special Representative of the United Nations (UN) Secretary General, at the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) Chief of Mission Office in Cyprus. Mr. Zerihoun spoke about the current status of negotiations on Cyprus aimed at eventually finding a political solution to the situation. He noted that the current President of Cyprus (Greek Cypriot), Mr. Tassos Papadopolous, and the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mr. Mehmet Ali Talat, are both committed to finding a viable constitutional solution. However, he expressed concern that Mr. Talat may encounter difficulties in his bid for re-election in the upcoming elections in the Turkish controlled areas of the island.

He noted that both the Greek and Turkish Cypriots consider Cyprus to be their home. However, the years of physical separation between the populations, when combined with the presence of a large number of Turkish soldiers in the north of the island and the militaristic approach of Ankara, are having a negative influence on the perceptions of the Turkish Cypriots towards a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

He further noted that it is not the role of the United Nations to force a peaceful solution on the island, but rather to encourage and assist the two sides in finding an acceptable and workable solution to the many problems arising from the years of instability. One of the solutions proposed by both President Papadopolous (Greek Cypriot) and the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mr. Talat, is to establish a bi-zonal island which co-exists in a state of peace. This proposed solution is not perfect and will require cooperation on both sides to solve a variety of longstanding problems resulting from the mass movement of Turkish Cypriots, formerly resident in the south of the island to the north and the concurrent movement of Greek Cypriots from the north to the south of the island. This problem has been further exacerbated by the immigration of several thousand Turks into those areas in the north of the island formerly inhabited by the Greek Cypriots. Many of the Cypriots feel that no resolution will be possible until the thousands of Turkish immigrants have returned to Turkey. The Cypriots appear willing to negotiate with the Turkish Cypriots, but not with the added pressure of the Turkish immigrant population resident in the northern portion of the island.

This potential resolution has complicated one major issue, the question of land ownership and how to enable fair and equitable restitution to the former owners in any future resolution of the island's conflict. There are insufficient funds available to the Turkish Cypriots in the north to provide fair market value to the former owners who are now resident in the south. It must also be noted that 37 per cent of the entire land mass of the island is currently under Turkish control in the northern portion of Cyprus. The large population of Turkish immigrants to the north of the island is considered to be a limiting factor to a successful re-election of Mr. Talat. This particular portion of the Turkish Cypriot population is known to follow the perceived directions for a hard line approach, supported by Ankara, to create a two state solution rather than the bi-zonal approach favoured by Papadopolous and Talat. As a result of the conflict, many Turkish Cypriots have left Cyprus to settle in other countries around the Mediterranean.

Mr. Zerihoun explained that any resolution to the conflict will require both populations to recognize and adopt acceptable solutions to both governance and power sharing. Interpretations of both governance and power sharing are proving to be a difficult issue to resolve. Amongst the remaining Turkish Cypriots in the north there is a feeling that re-unification is the only way for them to benefit from Cyprus' membership in the European Union. They are not convinced that Turkey's bid for EU membership is likely to be successful in the short term and they see the positive economic benefits accruing to the southern portion of the island.

The delegates and Mr. Zerihoun discussed the potential for peace in Cyprus and whether or not Canada might be called upon again to assist in the implementation of the peace plan. Much will depend on the outcome of the upcoming elections in the Turkish Cypriot part of the island and whether or not Mr. Talat will be re-elected and in a position to continue working on establishing negotiations with the President of the Republic of Cyprus. However, the Special Representative noted the positive impact of Canadian peacekeepers in the past and as they are still held in high regard by both sides in the conflict, Canada may be called upon again in the future to assist the United Nations in implementing any solution. It is worth noting that Cyprus' membership in the EU precludes any European nation from participating in any peacekeeping force on the island.

Following the meeting, the delegates had the opportunity to visit the memorial to those Canadian military members who had died while serving in Cyprus. The lone Canadian soldier still assigned to UNIFCYP, Capitan Michael Solonenko and his wife Lisa, led a walking tour of the base for the delegates and shared several stories related to the participation of Canadians in the island's peacekeeping activities over the past 30 years. Members of the delegation were also able to meet some members of the current UN peacekeeping force from the United Kingdom who have taken over the previous responsibilities of the Canadian military in manning the checkpoints between the north and south.

Following the visit to the base, the delegation visited one of the busiest checkpoints in Nicosia - "Checkpoint Charlie". It was noted that despite being one of the busiest checkpoints in Cyprus, dividing the Turkish Cypriot north from the Greek Cypriot south, movement back and forth across the frontier is accomplished with a minimum of disruption. The bulk of the traffic appeared to be from the north to the south with most people arriving on foot to do their weekly shopping in Nicosia where they purchase goods which have become scarce or unobtainable in the northern areas under Turkish control.

The delegation was able to attend a working lunch with members of the Cyprus Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs, chaired by Mr. Averof Neofytou, MP. This provided the delegates with the opportunity to discuss two issues of importance to the Canadian members: the EU ban on all Canadian seal products, and the upcoming vote to fill two spaces on the United Nations Security Council. Although sympathetic to the impact of the implementation of legislation banning the import of any Canadian seal products on both the native population of the Canadian Arctic and the maritime provinces, the members of the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs did not feel they would be able to influence their EU colleagues to either delay implementation of

the regulations or to institute a derogation in the implementation until Canadian experts could provide incontrovertible proof that the hunt is humane and meets all EU regulations. As representatives of an island nation, they were quite prepared to listen to the Canadian arguments, but remained convinced that the decision on the seal hunt ban within the EU is one based on emotions rather than the evidence of strong scientific data.

With regards to the second issue of supporting the Canadian request for election to the UN Security Council, there was a perceived reluctance on the part of the Cypriot members to appear to be voting against their EU counterparts – Portugal and Germany. During the lunch, the Canadian delegates used many arguments to encourage the Cypriot parliamentarians to support Canada for one of the two positions. One strong point shared with the hosts was the question of placing two European nations on the Security Council when they could support one of the countries and Canada at the same time – providing balance to the vote. They were also reminded that the vote would be conducted via a secret ballot and that their decision to support Canada would not be seen as a blatant move against their European counterparts. This idea was tentatively accepted by the Cypriot parliamentarians; however, they were reluctant to give a definitive answer on how they may vote at the UN on this question.

There followed an intensive discussion on the future of negotiations to bring a peaceful resolution to the current situation on Cyprus and the Canadian delegates were exposed to the underlying emotional and political roadblocks to achieving this goal. It was noted that the Cypriots feel close to their Turkish Cypriot neighbours with whom they have shared the island over the centuries. However, the constant presence and actions of the Turkish government in Ankara and the continuing presence of several thousand Turkish troops in the northern half of the island have created an atmosphere of distrust and, to some degree, fear. Some of the Cypriot parliamentarians explained their reluctance to trust the Turkish negotiators is worsened by the strong possibility that the Turkish Cypriot leader Mr. Talat will be defeated in the upcoming elections by the influx of Turkish immigrants in the north, a group which is more supportive of a strong line against any peace proposal which does not include a physical division of the island with two separate states.

It was also noted that despite the efforts of Turkey over the years to meet the rigid requirements instituted by the European Union for entry and the possibility of using EU membership as a lever in negotiations related to Cyprus, the Turkish government appears to be taking the line that *“the EU needs Turkey more than Turkey needs the EU”*. However, this attitude may change should their economy start to suffer drastically during this time of worldwide economic recession.

Following the meeting with the members of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the delegation met with several members of the Cyprus Branch of the CPA to discuss a variety of issues directly related to the current state of the Association on the International level. Discussions also took place on possible solutions which can be undertaken at both the mid-year EXCO (International Executive Committee) as well as the upcoming 55th Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Annual Conference scheduled for the end of September in Arusha, Tanzania. Among the proposals discussed was one to examine the possibility of changing the current process for

electing senior officers of the association from a wide open approach to one based on a strict rotational basis through the nine regions of the Commonwealth. No decisions were taken; however, these particular issues may be discussed in depth at the upcoming British Isles and Mediterranean Regional Conference in July in Guernsey. Canada has been invited to send two observers, one of which will come from the Canadian Branch and one from the Region, to attend this Conference.

On Tuesday, March 17th, the delegation met with Mr. Charilaos Stavrakis, MP, the Minister of Finance. Mr. Stavrakis extended his personal thanks to the members of the delegation for Canada's consistent support over many years and proceeded to provide a quick overview of the current political and economic situation in Cyprus.

As proved to be the case during all the delegation's meetings in Cyprus, much of the discussion centered on the future of negotiations to resolve the static situation in Cyprus. Mr. Stavrakis responded to questions from the delegates regarding the perception of who had the power to negotiate on behalf of the Turkish Cypriot population – Mr. Talat, in his role as leader of the Turkish Cypriots, or the Turkish Government in Ankara. It was his impression that despite the many efforts on the part of Mr. Talat, Turkish officials in Ankara were blocking any attempt to resolve the situation which did not include the creation of two separate states on the island.

Later, the discussions turned to the impact of the current global recession on the economy of Cyprus. Mr. Stavrakis noted that at this point in time, Cyprus was still enjoying some modest growth in its GDP, based in large part on its membership in the EU and the attendant benefits such membership could bring to smaller partners. Cyprus has also been very active in implementing progressive corporate tax rates at 10 per cent, the lowest rate in the EU. Combined with tax treaties with Russia avoiding double taxation, Cyprus' position as an entry point to the EU for Russian products was resulting in increased Russian investment in Cyprus. Several Canadian oil and gas companies involved in the Russian oil and gas industry have also set up operation in Cyprus to profit from the lower corporate tax rates and lack of double taxation. This was also helping to cushion the economic impact of the recession.

As a small country and member of the EU, Cyprus was able to offer prospective investors a more flexible business environment including: lower tax rates; skilled labour force; a strong economic sector based on Anglo-Saxon principles and a banking system which conforms to OECD requirements. Banks in Cyprus have a track record of being more conservative in their operations and were able to avoid being caught in the collapse of the banking industry in the US and Europe by not buying the toxic products which led to the current situation. The Minister emphasized that the situation may change in the future should the global economic recession continue for a few years, however, currently, the situation remains relatively stable with modest growth.

There were also discussions regarding the costs of re-unification of the island and the impact this might have on the economy. The Minister was candid in noting, re-unification will be costly to Cyprus, however, if successful, the peace dividend, increased tourism and the opening of the Turkish Cypriot and mainland markets would offset many of the costs. In response of other questions on this topic, he also noted that

the stability arising from re-unification would encourage outside investment in all aspects of the island's economy.

During the discussions, the Chair of the Canadian Branch, Russ Hiebert, MP, raised the issues of the EU's proposed legislation on eliminating the importation of any seal products and the possibility of Cypriot support for Canada's candidature for a seat on the United Nations Security Council. Mr. Stavrakis noted that there was little Cyprus could accomplish in attempting to defeat the proposed legislation regarding the Canadian seal hunt as the members of the EU regarded this issue as an intensely emotional one and were unlikely to change their minds or votes. He was prepared to discuss the possibility of supporting Canada's candidature for a seat on the UN Security Council with his cabinet colleague, but would make no promises or guarantees on how Cyprus would be voting.

Late in the morning, the delegates met with the President of the House of Representatives, the Hon. Marios Garoyian, MP. Russ Hiebert, MP, thanked Mr. Garoyian for the hospitality and assistance provided by the Cypriot House of Representatives in making the visit possible.

Mr. Garoyian welcomed the delegation to Cyprus and spoke with affection of the history of Canadian peacekeepers in Cyprus over many years. He then provided a brief overview of the current political situation in Cyprus and the functioning of the House of Representatives in a coalition state. There followed a discussion between the parliamentarians and the President on the similarities and differences in the procedural operations of the Cypriot House of Representatives and the Canadian Parliament. The differences are apparent in light of the fact that Cyprus currently has a coalition government and this has an impact on the composition of Cabinet and the day to day operations of the legislative assembly. He surprised the delegates when he noted that he had been shocked to have been elected as President by all parties in the House, after a very short career as an elected politician, and still found himself on a very steep learning curve.

It was noted that the House sits on Thursdays only and that the legislators spend the rest of the week working on Committees on a variety of issues. Committees have a very high profile in Cyprus and had been televised for several years; however, an assessment of the impact of televising committees had resulted in the removal of cameras from the meetings as it was judged to be having a negative impact on the work of Parliament. This decision had received the support of all parties in the House. In terms of the adoption of legislation, Mr. Garoyian noted that all legislation is subject to consultation with all parties prior to introduction in the House. It was explained that attempts are made to ensure that all concerns are respected and, whenever possible, included in the bill prior to its introduction.

He also noted that most parliamentarians are elected for two terms of five years in length, but as is the case in Canada, some are elected for only one term, while others are re-elected three or four times in their careers. He also noted that as a reflection of the changing demographics in Cyprus, the average age of Cypriot parliamentarians is less than 45 years. Although women do not make up a large percentage of the elected body, many serve as Chairs on committees.

As was the case in other meetings, the discussion turned to the current situation in Cyprus. Mr. Garoyian noted that Turkey's wish to be considered a guarantor to the peace process in Cyprus was unacceptable to the south, as this would provide Turkey a reason to maintain its troops on the island. This proposal will only delay any forward momentum on the negotiations. He further noted that Turkey is presently lobbying some members of the European Union to exert pressure on Cyprus to accept the Turkish proposal for a two state solution to the problems, a proposal which is unacceptable to the Republic of Cyprus which does not wish to see the island divided.

Later in the day, the delegates had the opportunity to meet with the Mayor of Famagusta, the Hon. Alexis Galanos. Mr. Galanos's position is somewhat unique as the city of Famagusta is occupied by Turkish troops and is essentially a ghost city. All of the former Cypriot citizens have left and only a few Turkish Cypriots, along with several thousand troops, remain in the city. As Mayor, Mr. Galanos was elected by the displaced citizens of Famagusta and acts as an ambassador for these citizens who fled to Limmassol and Larnaka in 2004. He was elected by these former citizens in 2007, with the express goal of returning the city to its former residents. From the observation galleries, it was possible to view the city and some of the Turkish troops moving about the area. The Mayor is convinced that once the troops are withdrawn and the citizens are permitted to return to their homes, Famagusta can be returned to normalcy in a short period of time.

Wednesday, March 18th, the delegates flew from Cyprus to Malta to continue its bilateral visit in the region.

On arrival in Valletta, the delegates were briefed by Ambassador / High Commissioner Alex Himmelfarb, the Canadian ambassador to Italy with concurrent responsibilities for Malta. High Commissioner Himmelfarb provided the delegates with a succinct and informative briefing on the current political situation in Malta; the historic ties between Malta and Canada and, the side benefit to the visit to Malta by the members of the delegation for Canadian foreign relations objectives. As a relatively new member of European Union, Malta has benefitted greatly by its partnerships with the EU and has expanded its influence in the region. Top among the topics discussed was the ongoing migration/asylum issue in Malta and the strain it is putting on Maltese society and economy. He further noted Malta's strong support for negotiations which have led to a closer Canada-EU Economic Partnership and the work underway to seek Malta's support for the prevention of an outright ban on Canadian seal products within the EU.

The briefing session was followed by the delegation's joint reception with High Commissioner Himmelfarb for VIPs representing Maltese parliamentarians, business leaders and senior officials in the Maltese government. Among the guests were: the Deputy Prime Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon. Tonio Borg, MP; the Minister for Social Policy, the Hon. John Dalli, MP; the Minister of Infrastructure, Transport and Communications, the Hon. Austin Gatt, MP; and the Minister of Environment, the Hon. George Pullicino, MP. Also in attendance were several senior parliamentarians including the Speaker, Hon. Louis Galea, MP. Thanks to the assistance provided by the Canadian Honorary Consul, Mr. Joe Demajo, Chairman of the Demajo Group in Malta, the delegates also had the opportunity to meet the Auditor General of Malta, the Maltese Attorney General, the UNHCR Representative for Malta and the Commander of

the Armed Forces of Malta. The reception provided all with the opportunity to discuss in informal conversations, those issues of importance to both the Canadian parliamentarians and the Maltese representatives present.

The delegation's formal meeting with the Speaker, the Hon. Louis Galea, MP coincided with the first annual "Mediterranean Day" Conference being hosted by the Maltese Parliament. During the meeting, the Speaker spoke about the close ties between Malta and Canada and the large number of Maltese citizens who have immigrated to Canada over the past decades. One of the delegates also mentioned that a former Chair of the CPA Canadian Branch, the Hon. Sue Barnes, PC, was a good example of the success achieved by these immigrants to Canada. Speaker Galea also spoke of the importance of the CPA in bringing together the many disparate countries of the Commonwealth in common cause and dialogue on a variety of global issues. Of great importance to the current Maltese government is the impact of information and communications technologies in bridging the "digital divide" between the developed and developing countries.

Following the meeting, the Speaker had arranged for the delegation to attend the official opening ceremonies of "Mediterranean Day" celebrating Malta's relations with the European, North African and Middle Eastern countries in the Mediterranean Basin. Malta attaches a great importance to good relations in the Basin with its neighbours as a continuation of its rich history and cultural ties with these countries. It hopes to make use of this Conference to encourage youth in the region to develop close working ties with each other for the future.

The delegates then met with several Maltese parliamentarians who are active members of the CPA Malta Branch and, who have a strong interest in developing closer ties with Canada in the realm of assistance in dealing with the increasingly large number of illegal migrants and economic refugees from North Africa. Among the participants were: the Hon. Carmelo Mifsud Bonnici, MP, Minister for Justice and Home Affairs; the Hon. David Agius, MP, Government Whip; the Hon. Francis Zammit Dimteh, MP, Chair of the Malta Branch of the CPA; the Hon. Charles Mangion, MP, Chair of the Public Accounts Committee; the Hon. José Herrera, MP, Opposition Critic for Home Affairs, and Hon. Luciano Busuttil, MP, Opposition Critic for European Affairs.

It was noted that the issue of illegal migrants and asylum seekers landing on the island's shores is a huge challenge for the Maltese society and government. Current figures indicate in excess of 3,400 individuals arriving over the year – a number which represents almost 10% of the island's total population, of this number, almost 98% apply for asylum. For many of these people, they are under the mistaken impression that they have arrived in Italy rather than on the island of Malta and but still seek asylum, hoping to eventually reach one of the mainland European countries. Despite the fact that most wish to leave Malta, EU regulations require them to remain on the island until such time as a member country within the EU is prepared to accept them as asylum seekers, refugees or landed immigrants.

This situation creates a massive drain on the resources of the Maltese government. Parliamentarians at the meeting emphasized that the issue is a non-partisan one. Over the past few years, the government of Malta has been lobbying its colleagues in the

European Union, the United States of America, Canada and others to assist in resolving the problem by accepting these refugees. It was noted during the discussions, that the Canadian government has been slow to respond, despite the fact that the refugees have been vetted by the UNHCR, are unable to return to their home countries and, in most cases, those verified refugees, who wish, are provided with English language training to increase their skills set and acceptability as potential immigrants to both Canada and the US. The Maltese parliamentarians argued strongly for Canada to reconsider taking some of these refugees to ease the strains on few facilities available to house the increasing numbers of refugees and illegal migrant workers. Following a very interactive discussion, the Canadian delegates agreed to raise this issue with Canadian government officials on their return to Ottawa.

Among other issues discussed at the meeting were the possibility of a strengthened Double Taxation Agreement between Malta and Canada which would lead to increased investment in Malta to the benefit of both countries. It was noted that Malta is no longer a “niche” but rather a “hub” for financial services in the region which is a direct result of its conservative and solid banking services industry – a fact demonstrated by the evidence that it is managing well during the current economic crisis affecting most of its European partners.

Prior to the end of the meeting, the Canadian parliamentarians raised two issues of importance to Canada – the proposed European Union legislation to ban the importation of Canadian seal products and Canada’s candidature for one of the two seats on the United Nations Security Council.

It was noted that the likelihood of being able to stop the adoption of the legislation banning Canadian seal products into the European Union was extremely slim, but Malta did agree to consider proposing a derogation of the regulations at the European Council meetings.

On the topic of Canada’s candidature for one of the two seats on the UN Security Council, the delegates reminded their Maltese counterparts that the votes at the United Nations are secret and as the other two candidates are European, Canada’s election to the Council would help to balance representation. The Maltese parliamentarians agreed to consider the implications of voting for Canada at the upcoming elections for the UN Security Council seats.

In closing, one of the Maltese parliamentarians raised his concerns about the impact of climate change and rising sea levels, noting that Malta and other Mediterranean islands would be severely impacted by any major increase in sea levels. He reiterated the need to find alternative forms to energy to mitigate climate change. He noted that Malta is considering the use of offshore wind turbines, photovoltaic energy systems and the use of desalinization plants to assist in meeting global carbon reduction targets

The delegation then toured both the airport and main seaport on Malta to discuss border security, immigration controls and security operations with the Assistant Commissioner of the Malta Police, Mr. Andrew Seychell. These tours and the accompanying briefings were an important element in understanding the practical concerns about the increasing numbers of illegal migrant workers and genuine refugees arriving on Malta’s coastline.

During the tours, Mr. Seychell and his senior staff provided detailed briefings on the controls in place to verify arrivals and departures from the islands including the use of state of the art high tech equipment for passport verification, personal security at both venues. As a member of the European Union, Malta also utilizes many of the procedures in place in the rest of Europe to stream holders of valid European passports from those travellers holding non-European passports. It was noted that as an island, Malta also makes use of helicopters, fixed wing aircraft and high-speed boats in the operational aspects of border security. The use of such equipment also means that they have longer lead times in identifying craft from North Africa suspected of carrying illegal migrants and refugees and, can reach these boats easily in cases where they are at risk of sinking and/or prior to their arrival on its coasts. He also noted the close collaboration with Canadian police trainers in the past and that he was looking forward to working with the Canada Border Security Agency and the RCMP posted to the Canadian Embassy in Rome in making additional improvements to their controls and operations.

In conclusion, the members of the delegation wish to extend their sincere thanks to the Hon. Marios Garoyian, MP, President of the House of Representatives, Cyprus; Hon. Louis Galea, MP, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Malta; the parliamentarians and staff of the parliaments of Cyprus and Malta for their active participation in the development and implementation of the program and their generous hospitality throughout the visit. A strong vote of thanks must also be sent to Ambassador Marta Moszczenska, Canadian Ambassador to Romania with responsibility for Cyprus; Ambassador Alex Himmelfarb, Canadian Ambassador to Italy with responsibility for Malta and, Peter Egyed, Counsellor, Political and Public Affairs, Embassy of Canada, Italy for their invaluable assistance throughout this bilateral visit.

Respectfully submitted,

Russ Hiebert, M.P., Chair Canadian Branch
of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)

Travel Costs

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| ASSOCIATION | Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) |
| ACTIVITY | Bilateral Visit to Nicosia, Cyprus and Valetta, Malta |
| DESTINATION | Nicosia, Cyprus and Valetta, Malta |
| DATES | March 14-22, 2009 |
| DELEGATION | |
| SENATE | |
| HOUSE OF COMMONS | Russ Hiebert, M.P., Guy André, MP, Patricia Davidson, MP, Irene Mathyssen, MP, Alexandra Mendès, MP, Yasmin Ratansi, MP, and Bev Shipley, MP. |
| STAFF | Carol Chafe, Executive Secretary |
| TRANSPORTATION | \$ 43,295.78 |
| ACCOMMODATION | \$ 4,137.33 |
| HOSPITALITY | \$ 2,161.42 |
| PER DIEMS | \$ 5,853.25 |
| OFFICIAL GIFTS | \$ 848.79 |
| MISCELLANEOUS/REGISTRATION FEES | \$ 22.18 |
| TOTAL | \$ 56,318.75 |