

**NOTES FOR A TOAST GIVEN BY
THE HONOURABLE NOËL A. KINSELLA,
SPEAKER OF THE SENATE**

**AT A DINNER HOSTED BY CIRIL SMRKOLJ, PRESIDENT OF THE
SLOVENIAN CHAMBER OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY**

MAY 22, 2009

Mr. Smrkolj,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

Thank you very much for welcoming us here tonight. Since we arrived in your country, we have had the wonderful opportunity to learn about your culture and your people, and we welcome the chance to continue this dialogue tonight.

Let me also say how much I enjoyed visiting the Minorite Monastery earlier this evening. From what I understand, this Monastery dates back to the Middle Ages. As someone who has always been very interested in history, it was a pleasure to visit a Monastery as ancient and storied as this one.

It is a pleasure to be hosted tonight by Mr. Ciril Smrkolj, President of the Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry of Slovenia. You have been a strong defender of the interests of the Slovenian agricultural and forestry sector, and we look forward to having productive discussions with your organization.

We are here in Slovenia at a time of great economic uncertainty. The effects of the global economic slowdown have put in jeopardy the jobs of many hard-working people in both of our countries. In particular, those working in the agricultural and forestry sectors have been hit hard, and they worry about how the economic crisis will affect their livelihood.

In response to the global economic slowdown, it is important for Canada and Slovenia to find ways to reduce its negative impact on our relationship, as well as examining every opportunity where trade can be increased. We hope that the negotiations for an enhanced economic partnership between Canada and the EU, launched in early May, will proceed quickly. It is also important that Canada and Slovenia work together within multilateral organizations to ensure the best interests of those who work in our agricultural and forestry sectors.

Because of the strong relationship that has developed between our countries over the past decade, we are in a good place to address these challenges. Over the past several years our countries have participated in a number of parliamentary exchanges, as well as cooperated in multilateral organizations like NATO and the United Nations. This past cooperation will serve us well as we go

about developing strategies to counter the effects from the global economic slowdown.

Yet despite our increasing bilateral and multilateral cooperation, there remains much room to build on our relationship. While trade and investment levels between Canada and Slovenia are increasing, there are many other avenues of commercial cooperation that have yet to be explored. Through the dialogue that we are having tonight, as well as the future discussions we hope to have soon, I hope to address the many ways that our two countries can continue building on our relationship.

In closing, let me once again express my thanks for having the opportunity to speak with you tonight. I sincerely hope that we will have the chance to speak again soon.