



Press release
For immediate release



VIA RAIL WELCOMES 40 NEW CANADIANS DURING A CITIZENSHIP CEREMONY AT OTTAWA STATION

Ottawa, Thursday, October 25, 2018 – Today at VIA Rail Canada's (VIA Rail) Ottawa Station, 40 new citizens from 22 countries were sworn in as Canadian citizens during a ceremony organized by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, the Institute for Canadian Citizenship (ICC) and VIA Rail, in the presence of The Honourable Ahmed Hussen, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Charlie Foran, CEO of ICC, Annie Smith St. Georges, Elder of the Algonquin Territory, and VIA Rail President and Chief Executive Officer Yves Desjardins-Siciliano.

Before the ceremony, the ICC and VIA Rail hosted discussions during which the new Canadians and their guests were invited to share their journeys to citizenship and reflect on what being Canadian means to them. The roundtables were conducted by 15 VIA Rail employees as part of the organization's 40th anniversary and *40 Sustainable Actions initiative*. Close to 150 people attended the celebration at the station.

"As someone who travelled the path of citizenship myself, I can personally attest to the deep meaning that Canadian citizenship holds for our new Canadians. Achieving Canadian citizenship is not only deeply personal, it's also an important step that allows immigrants to gain a deeper sense of belonging to our country, and to become more active members of our society. Congratulations to Via Rail on the occasion of their 40th anniversary and to today's new Canadians who received their citizenship at the Via Rail Ottawa Station, welcome to the Canadian family. Our journey together is just beginning."

-The Honourable Ahmed Hussen, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship

"Travelling by train from Toronto to Ottawa to celebrate Canada's newest citizens reminded me of the vital role of railways in building our country. For 40 years, VIA Rail has connected communities all across Canada—and for the past six, through our partnership with VIA, nearly 30 000 new Canadians have traveled and explored Canada by rail using the ICC's Cultural Access Pass. What a great way to discover and reflect on what it means to be a Canadian citizen!"

- Charlie Foran, CEO of the Institute for Canadian Citizenship

"Long ago, the country's passenger trains carried new immigrants to the regions where they would eventually settle and build the Canada we know today. One in five Canadians is an immigrant. Our involvement in this ceremony is tied to our firm belief that diversity is one of Canada's greatest strengths. The determination and courage of the many who chose to build their lives and future of their children in Canada have helped build this country, a place where the values of peace, order and good government prevail."

- Yves Desjardins-Siciliano, President and Chief Executive Officer, VIA Rail Canada

VIA Rail is proud to host citizenship ceremonies in its stations since 2015. These ceremonies are part of a long-standing relationship with the ICC and its Cultural Access Pass (CAP) program. Through this collaboration, VIA Rail offers new citizens who are members of the ICC's CAP program tickets at 50 per cent off the lowest available fare for themselves and

members of their families to discover new destinations among the 400 communities served by VIA Rail, in their first year of citizenship. Since the offer was launched in 2012, nearly 30,000 new citizens have taken advantage of this offer and travelled all around the country.

About The Institute for Canadian Citizenship

Powered by a passionate and committed national network, the Institute for Canadian Citizenship (ICC) delivers programs and special projects that inspire Canadians to be inclusive, create opportunities to connect, and encourage active citizenship. The ICC is a national charity co-founded by The Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson and John Ralston Saul. For more information, visit icc-icc.ca.

About VIA Rail Canada

As Canada's national rail passenger service, VIA Rail (viarail.ca) and all its employees are mandated to provide safe, efficient and economical passenger transportation service, in both official languages of our country. VIA Rail operates intercity, regional and transcontinental trains linking over 400 communities across Canada, and safely transports nearly four million passengers annually. The Corporation was awarded seven Safety Awards by the Railway Association of Canada over the last eight years. For more information, visit: www.viarail.ca/en/about-via-rail

-30 -

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