

Joint Communiqué of the Bureau of the EU-Ukraine Parliamentary Association Committee

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Press release

On 2 March 2016, the Bureau of the EU-Ukraine Parliamentary Association Committee (PAC) met in Brussels under the co-chairmanship of Mr. Andrej Plenković (EPP, HR) on behalf of the European Parliament and of Mr. Ostap Semerak on behalf of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine with participation of Vice-Chairs Ms. Kaja Kallas (ALDE, EE), Mr. Tibor Szanyi (S&D, HU), Ms. Iryna Gerashchenko, and Mr. Victor Galasiuk, as well as other Members of the Parliamentary Association Committee.

Following the meeting, the Bureau issued the following statement:

“Our meeting is taking place in the context of the “Ukraine Week” in the European Parliament (EP), an unprecedented event illustrating the EP’s strong commitment to supporting the Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada in its ambitious modernisation efforts, but also against the background of the second anniversary of the Revolution of Dignity. Remembering those who died on Maidan Square for a better future and a European Ukraine, and all those who died as a result of aggression against Ukraine, places upon the Ukrainian authorities a historic task of implementing in-depth reforms in the country to respond to the citizens’ high expectations. First and foremost, this encompasses the eradication of corruption, the de-oligarchisation of society, and the reform of the judiciary.

We welcome the ongoing reform process in Ukraine and the implementation of the Association Agreement, despite the challenging security environment caused by Russian aggression. In order to keep on carrying out systemic reforms, Ukraine needs a solid government relying on a stable majority. We therefore appeal to all reform-minded forces in Ukraine to find a common ground and put all efforts towards finding a sustainable way out of the current political disturbances.

We reiterate our unequivocal support for the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders and call on the Russian Federation to end its occupation of Crimea as well as its ongoing aggression on Eastern Ukraine. We believe that the Minsk agreements open the way to the peaceful reintegration of the temporarily occupied territories, and therefore call on the Russian Federation to implement without further delay provisions of the Minsk agreements. We emphasize that restrictive measures introduced by the European Union towards Russia should remain in force the Minsk agreements are effectively and fully implemented. We deplore the worsening of the security and humanitarian situation caused by the Russian aggression in the Donbas, and reiterate our deep concern about the human rights violations in Russian-occupied Crimea, especially targeting the Crimean Tatars, as well as our willingness to keep shedding light on these situations.

We look forward to the completion of the ratification process of the Association Agreement by the EU Member States and are ready to contribute as deemed appropriate to the current discussions taking place in the Netherlands in preparation for the referendum of 6 April. We welcome the entry into force of the EU-Ukraine DCFTA as of 1 January 2016 and underline the opportunities it offers for the development of Ukraine economy. But we strongly condemn the unilateral suspension by the Russian Federation of its free trade agreement with Ukraine and the introduction of heavy trade restrictions on Ukrainian exports, as well as the hampering of transit of Ukrainian goods to third countries.

On the establishment of a visa-free regime, we expect the European Commission to forward the related proposal to Council and European Parliament as soon as possible.

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We welcome the finalisation of the Needs Assessment Mission in the Ukrainian parliament and look forward to the immediate start of the implementation phase of the capacity-building programme. We express hope that the main conclusions and recommendations from the Report would serve as a landmark for reforming the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. Concerning our interparliamentary work, we reiterate our joint determination to continue our intensive cooperation and to keep Ukraine at the top of the EU agenda. We are firmly committed to closely monitoring the implementation of the Association Agreement and other areas of EU-Ukraine relations, and therefore established at our meeting today tandems for sectorial cooperation."

Further information

- Andrej Plenković (EPP, null): <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/112755.html>

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