

**Joint Communiqué of the Bureau of the EU-Ukraine Parliamentary Association Committee,
Kyiv, 2 July 2015**

On 2 July 2015, the Bureau of the EU-Ukraine Parliamentary Association Committee (PAC) met in Kyiv under the co-chairmanship of Mr. Andrej Plenković 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, Mr. Tibor Szanyi, Ms. Iryna Gerashchenko, and Mr. Victor Galasiuk.

The Bureau members discussed a wide range of issues affecting the EU-Ukraine relations. The members considered the overall security and political situation in Ukraine and strongly condemned the recent resurgence of violence in the east and human rights abuses in the temporally occupied Crimea. They reiterated their full commitments to the Minsk agreements and called upon the Russian Federation to fully abide by these agreements, including through the withdrawal of mercenaries and military assets from the Ukrainian territory and the immediate release of all Ukrainian citizens including Nadiya Savchenko who were captured in Ukraine and are being illegally imprisoned in Russia. They welcomed the recent extension of the restrictive measures against Russia until the end of January 2016. They took note of the recent talks carried out under the "Normandie format" and further encouraged the work of the Tripartite Working Group and the Working Sub-Groups in Minsk. The Bureau members also discussed the Ukrainian suggestion to strengthen the mandate of the EUAM and to launch a new CSDP mission that could support the implementation of the Minsk Agreements.

The Bureau members also expressed deep concern regarding the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Ukraine and welcomed the enormous humanitarian and financial support of the European Union to help Ukraine cope with this challenge. They reiterated the need for the EU humanitarian assistance to be more visible in the Eastern and Southern regions of Ukraine.

The Bureau members welcomed the efforts of the Ukrainian authorities on the reform agenda and on the implementation of the Association Agreement, despite the challenging security environment. They took stock of progress made by Ukraine in conduct of constitutional reform, decentralization, fight against corruption, enhancement of the judiciary, reform of energy sector, public broadcasting, reform of the civilian security sector and the preparation for local elections. Bureau Members underlined the need to pursue the comprehensive reform agenda with determination and conviction, regardless of adverse circumstances. The Bureau members look forward to the provisional application of the DCFTA as of 1 January 2016, which is expected to bring major benefits to the Ukrainian economy.

Along with that, the Bureau members reiterated the importance for structural economic reforms in Ukraine and the establishment of a more favourable legislative environment for high-tech, R&D intense businesses, and new industries by eliminating the competitive disadvantages of institutional, regulatory, fiscal, infrastructural, and education policy to create highly-productive jobs, higher wages, production of competitive quality, and increasing the external trade.

They also discussed the leading role of the Parliament in the preparation and implementation of reforms and welcomed the imminent signature of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Verkhovna Rada and the European Parliament on a joint framework for parliamentary support and capacity building.

The Bureau welcomed the progress of Ukraine in the implementation of the Visa Liberalization Action Plan and called the European Commission to report on progress by the end of 2015 on the completion of the second phase of Action Plan. The Bureau members encouraged Ukraine to fulfill the benchmarks that would allow European Commission to provide positive recommendation enabling Ukraine to be granted a visa free regime with the EU in 2016.

In a final note, the Bureau members reiterated that pursuant to Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union, Ukraine has a European perspective and may apply to become a member of the European Union provided it respects the principles of democracy, fundamental freedoms and human and minority rights, ensures the rule of law and adheres to the Copenhagen criteria.

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