



**DELEGATION TO THE
EU-UKRAINE PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE**

JOINT STATEMENT

**by Andrej PLENKOVIC and Ostap SEMERAK
Co-Chairs of the EU-Ukraine Parliamentary Association Committee**

**on the first anniversary of the simultaneous ratification of the EU-Ukraine
Association Agreement by the European Parliament and the Verkhovna Rada
of Ukraine.**

Brussels, 16 September 2015. We met today to mark the first anniversary of the simultaneous ratification of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement by the European Parliament and the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. This joint ratification was a symbol of strong solidarity and unity between citizens of Ukraine and citizens of the European Union.

We express our satisfaction regarding the good progress of the ratification process, with the vast majority of Member States having already completed the ratification according to their internal procedures. But we urge the remaining states to take all necessary measures to complete it as promptly as possible.

Since this historical day, the European Parliament has demonstrated at numerous occasions its support to Ukraine on its democratic reform path and struggle to maintain its sovereignty and territorial integrity. The European Parliament adopted several resolutions and numerous statements expressing its full solidarity with Ukraine and its people and condemning Russia's aggressive and expansionist policy, as well as illegal detention and trial of Nadia Savchenko, Oleg Sentsov, Olexandr Kolchenko and other Ukrainian citizens in Russia. The European Parliament further stressed its commitment to assist Ukraine in the peaceful reintegration of the temporary occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk and the territory of illegally annexed Crimea.

We would like to welcome the renewed and intensified parliamentary cooperation between the European Parliament and the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine within the new framework of the EU-Ukraine Parliamentary Association Committee, officially launched in February this year with the aim of supporting Ukraine in the implementation of the Association Agreement. Furthermore, in July this year, the President of the European Parliament and the Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada signed a Memorandum of Understanding aimed at establishing a joint framework for parliamentary support and capacity-building for the Ukrainian Parliament. The modernisation of the Verkhovna Rada could become an example for further reforms of the Ukrainian governmental institutions.

We further welcome the recent decision of the European Parliament to send an electoral observation mission for the local elections taking place in Ukraine on the 25th October 2015. In this context we call for avoiding any attempt to conduct elections on temporarily uncontrolled territories in violation of Ukrainian laws.

Today we restate our determination and mutual obligation to do our utmost to implement as swiftly as possible the Association Agreement. Progress has already been made and we underline in particular the adoption in the first reading of the amendments to the Constitution of Ukraine on the decentralisation and reform of the national police. In the months to come, we intend to focus our inter-parliamentary dialogue on crucial systemic issues in which the Verkhovna Rada has a key role to play - such as consolidation of the rule of law, fight against corruption, ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, judicial reform, public administration, public health sectors, restructuring of the energy sector, modernisation of public finance management.

We also reiterate our intention to hold regular public hearings with international experts and NGOs to map out facts and keep record of the breaches of human rights in the occupied parts of Donetsk and Luhansk as well as in the illegally annexed Crimea. We call for further humanitarian assistance to Ukraine with the special attention to the needs of Ukrainian children who are most affected by the conflict.

In the light of the current severe economic hardship in the country and the reform process still ahead of Ukraine, we very much welcome the efforts deployed by the European Union and the operational support by the European Commission to provide targeted assistance to Ukraine, and intend to work together towards the fulfilment of all pre-conditions so that Ukraine can fully benefit from this assistance. We also encourage individual EU Member States to develop or strengthen their bilateral assistance to Ukraine, in a coordinated manner on the EU level.

We welcome the decision of the Council of the European Union to extend by 6 months the application of the EU restrictive measures targeting physical persons and entities involved in undermining Ukrainian territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence. Taking into account further deteriorating humanitarian situation in the East of Ukraine and fragile cease fire under the Minsk peaceful process, we call for unrestricted access to the temporarily occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk to be provided for humanitarian workers and for the delivery of humanitarian aid, as well as for the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission.

We would like to strongly welcome the progress of Ukraine in implementing the Visa Liberalisation Action Plan and express hope that the European Commission will be able to issue a positive recommendation by the end of the year, paving the way for granting a visa free regime to Ukraine.

As we welcome the work in progress on the political part of the Association Agreement, we strongly support an entry into force of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area as of 1 January 2016. The full application of the Association Agreement will bring tangible benefits to all Ukrainian citizens, while significantly deepening the association of Ukraine with the

EU. We are fully aware that this full implementation requires both political will and the capacity to resist external pressures aiming at delaying one more time this process. This is why it is more important than ever to stand together and to continue transforming words of solidarity into concrete actions.

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