



COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
DELEGATION TO THE
EU-UKRAINE PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE
JOINT STATEMENT

by
Mr David McALLISTER, Chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs,
Mr Dariusz ROSATI, Chair of the Delegation to the EU-Ukraine Parliamentary Association
Committee and
Mr Michael GAHLER, AFET standing rapporteur on Ukraine

Strasbourg, 17 May 2017. “Today’s signature of the law exempting Ukrainians from visa requirements for travelling in the EU marks the finalisation of a long process which started already in 2008.

As of next month, Ukrainian citizens will be able to travel to the EU without visa for up to 90 days. It makes no doubt that this will be an outstanding way of developing interpersonal contacts, facilitating the development of joint projects, and building bridges among the populations of Ukraine and of the EU. It plants a seed that will hopefully grow into a tall tree with many fruits.

Fulfilling all the benchmarks of the visa liberalisation action plan has required a tremendous reform efforts from the side of the Ukrainian authorities. This is all the more remarkable bearing in mind the challenging conditions under which they had to be carried out, as a result of the Russian aggression against Ukraine. Among the benchmarks that were fulfilled, we particularly underline the achievements in the field of anti-discrimination and of fight against corruption. It would be hard to understand backwards steps in these areas and beyond, now that the visa-free regime has been granted. This is why we call on the Ukrainian authorities and on our counterparts in the Verkhovna Rada to resist any attempt to unravel these achievements, and on the contrary to pursue with determination the fight for the consolidation of the anti-discrimination legislation and for independent anticorruption institutions.

On this joyful day for Ukraine and for EU-Ukraine relations, we do not forget however about the deeply worrying developments in the Eastern part of Ukraine and in illegally annexed Crimea. We remember in particular the civilians and soldiers who died in the past few days in Avdiivka. As we heard today from Minister for Foreign Affairs Pavlo Klimkin, the tendency observed since a few months hinting at the integration of the territories held by Russian troops and their proxies into the Russian economic and administrative system is aggravating. We reiterate our calls to make all efforts to stop this evolution and to preserve the unity of the country and of the people, in particular through progress in the implementation of the Minsk agreements. We believe that these developments must be taken into account notably in the upcoming discussions on the EU sanctions against the Russian Federation, especially the economic ones.”

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