

Remarks by President Donald Tusk following the EU-Ukraine summit

I am very impressed by the patience and the determination of the Ukrainian people in their struggle to retain territorial integrity and sovereignty. You are a unique example of courage, dignity and common sense. I know that you deserve more.

Also from us, from Europe. You have many friends here, and I can promise you that you will not be left behind. We also have our limitations, but we will continue in our efforts to fulfil your justified expectations.

We highly rate the efforts of the Ukrainian authorities, including those of President Poroshenko, to implement large-scale reforms in extremely difficult conditions. Ukraine's success will be the success of all of Europe.

(delivered in Ukrainian)

Three days ago we commemorated the third anniversary of the Euromaidan. Since then Ukraine has gone through very difficult times, with Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol, and its aggression in eastern Ukraine. Europe must do everything in its power to make sure that Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and stability are preserved. We continue to support the Minsk process and our sanctions are linked with the complete implementation of the Minsk Agreements. Recently we renewed support to the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission.

The last three years have seen the birth of a new Ukraine that advances its democracy and economy through, sometimes very tough, reforms. Additional assistance from Europe should support Ukraine in strengthening its democratic path.

In this context we discussed visas. I am happy that all EU Member States decided Ukraine is ready for a visa-free regime. This decision is a recognition of Ukraine's achievements in meeting European standards. It will enter into force once the European Parliament and the Council find an agreement on the reform of the EU's visa policy, which is on track. We discussed this with President Schulz today and we will intensify work with the Parliament to make it happen. But I want to underline that this discussion does not concern Ukraine any more, as Ukraine has already done its work perfectly. Now the discussion concerns relations between the EU Member States and the European Parliament with regard to the EU's visa policy.

Before concluding, let me add a comment on the future of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, following the Dutch referendum. My goal is clear: to finish the ratification process of the Association Agreement. This agreement is not only of mutual economic benefit, but - more importantly - it carries great geopolitical significance. After having spoken to Prime Minister Rutte and President Poroshenko, I can report that we are working hard to find a solution that will allow the Dutch to ratify, by addressing all their concerns, while fully respecting the interests of Ukraine and making sure that the remaining 27 do not need to ratify again. It is my hope and intention to find such a solution at the December European Council.

Finally, let me say that the summit today is another proof of our concrete commitment to Ukraine.