

Remarks by President Donald Tusk following the EU-Ukraine summit in Kyiv

This Summit is a good moment to celebrate the strong and deepening friendship between the European Union and Ukraine.

Yesterday the EU finalised the ratification of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement. It will enter into force on the 1st of September. The provisional application of the trade part that entered into force last year has already increased our trade by 25%. The fully ratified Agreement will allow us to further strengthen our cooperation and to deepen the political association and economic integration of Ukraine with the EU. And for me the key sentence of the Association Agreement still is that, and I quote, "the European Union acknowledges the European aspirations of Ukraine and welcomes its European choice".

Moreover, one month ago Ukrainian citizens were given the opportunity for the very first time to travel to the European Union without a visa. This was possible only thanks to your hard work. And so let me congratulate all Ukrainians on this great achievement.

And today, the EU has again made clear that we stand steadfastly behind Ukraine against Russia's aggression and attempts to subvert your independence. We reiterated our continued support for Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty. We do not recognise the illegal annexation of Crimea. We call for the full implementation of the Minsk Agreements by all sides, underlining Russia's responsibility in this regard. On 28 June, the EU again decided to roll over its economic sanctions against Russia.

In this context, I would also like to honour the famous Ukrainian filmmaker and writer, Oleg Sentsov, who was arrested in Crimea and convicted. Today, as you mentioned Petro, is his birthday. I call for the immediate release of all illegally detained Ukrainian citizens in Russia and on the Crimean peninsula.

Now, let me repeat what I said this morning. Together we have achieved a lot, but we are still only halfway down the road. I am convinced that if you continue to be as determined, as courageous and as consistent as you were back then in Maidan, as you were during the struggle for Ukraine's integrity, if you can withstand the burden of reforms and not give up, then you will reach your dreams and goals. As your friend, I will afford myself just one remark.

Today I can see clearly that you will not be defeated by an external enemy. You are too strong. You can only be defeated by yourselves. This is why you need to keep your unity at any cost, and avoid like the plague internal conflicts. I always repeated this to my compatriots when I was Prime Minister of Poland, I repeat this now to the whole of Europe: only united can we overcome the challenges of modern times. There is nothing worse than the break-up of a community in the face of modern-day threats. Democracy is about differences of opinion and competition, but also about permanent looking for consensus. Therefore, your most important task should be to build a modern state that is citizen-friendly, resistant to corruption, respectful of the highest standards of public life. If you pass also this exam, nothing and no-one will defeat you.

Petro, before ending my intervention, let me give you this document: this is the final decision of the EU ratification of our Association Agreement. Congratulations.