



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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PRESSE 206

**EU-UKRAINE COOPERATION COUNCIL  
FIFTEENTH MEETING  
EU Press release**

The fifteenth EU-Ukraine Cooperation Council was held today in Brussels.

The Cooperation Council noted Ukraine's restated commitment to a foreign policy based upon European integration, and recalled the ambition of both the EU and Ukraine to upgrade their contractual relations to the level of political association and economic integration.

In this context, the EU noted a renewed undertaking from Ukraine to make progress in the implementation of the Association Agenda, the joint instrument established to prepare the way for entry into force of an Association Agreement including a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area. Both sides welcomed the initialling of the text of the Association Agreement on 30 March 2012, after five years of negotiation. The Council adopted two reports on the implementation of the Association Agenda and undertook to give urgent attention to accelerating its implementation.

Reviewing recent developments, the EU expressed its strong concern over the state of the rule of law in Ukraine, recalling a number of statements made by EU leaders on the criminal proceedings against members of the former government, including Yulia Tymoshenko, Yuriy Lutsenko, Valeriy Ivaschenko, and others. The EU repeated its call on Ukraine to clarify reports regarding the treatment of Mrs Tymoshenko in Kharkiv on 20 April, and to allow the Ombudswoman and other persons fulfilling independent functions to conduct their work freely. The EU stressed its assessment that selective justice was a systemic problem in Ukraine which could only be fully remedied through a comprehensive reform. Any progress towards political association and economic integration will depend on Ukraine's performance, notably in relation to respect for common values and the rule of law. The EU insisted on the full respect by Ukraine of the rights of detainees and defendants, in line with Ukraine's international obligations, including suitable medical care, legal advice, and access for visitors.

**P R E S S**

The Cooperation Council discussed a number of international and regional issues, including the response of both sides to the global economic situation. In this context, the importance of supporting a multilateral rules-based approach to economic governance was underlined.

The Cooperation Council looked forward to the strengthening of the Eastern Partnership initiative in the run-up to the 2013 Eastern Partnership summit, and the benefits of co-operation through both the bilateral and multilateral channels. The Council noted the positive example which would be set to all Eastern Partnership countries by the conclusion of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area.

The Cooperation Council underlined the importance of strengthened cooperation in the area of foreign and security policy, as well as in defence policy. It reiterated in particular the value of close cooperation in the regional framework, notably in the context of the 5+2 process for the settlement of Transnistria. The Council also discussed a number of other international issues including Belarus.

The Cooperation Council welcomed progress made by Ukraine in implementing the action plan on visa liberalization, and noted the joint conclusions of 2011 EU-Ukraine Justice and Home Affairs ministerial meeting, as well as other meetings of senior officials.

The Cooperation Council discussed the medium-term perspectives for the development of relations. The EU side stressed that Ukraine's commitment to the spirit of political association would be judged in particular on the basis of its response to the selective justice issue, as well as broader judicial reform, the preparation and delivery of free and fair parliamentary elections in October, and the acceleration of the reforms set out in the Association Agenda. The EU side urged Ukraine to build on recent reforms in areas such as criminal procedure and freedom of association, with systematic structural reforms conducted in a transparent and inclusive manner. Ukraine's renewed commitment to address business climate issues was also noted.

Both sides underlined the importance of ongoing energy reform, including the restructuring of the Joint Stock Company Naftogaz, and noted recent legislation in this area.

The Co-operation Council welcomed the ongoing efforts of the international community to overcome the legacy of the Chernobyl accident and prepare the decommissioning of the site.

The EU was represented by Villy Søvndal, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Denmark. Prime Minister Mykola Azarov led the Ukrainian delegation.

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