



**EUROPEAN COUNCIL
THE PRESIDENT**

**Brussels, 13 September 2010
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**Statement by
Herman VAN ROMPUY,
President of the European Council,
following his meeting with Viktor YANUKOVYCH
President of Ukraine**

"I am pleased to welcome President Yanukovych back to Brussels. Our regular meetings demonstrate the continued dynamism of the EU - Ukraine relationship.

We have continued our discussion on issues of fundamental importance for the EU - Ukraine relationship, ranging from the status of the Association Agreement and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area, through a broad range of reforms.

Ukraine is seeing a period of political stability, based on a strong parliamentary majority. This enables Ukraine to move forward with important reforms. The agreement found between Ukraine and the IMF on a new Stand-by Arrangement demonstrates the government's willingness to find solutions. Fulfilment of the criteria of the Stand-by Arrangement will enable the EU to move forward with the disbursement of our Macro-financial Assistance to Ukraine.

With Ukraine moving forward in her reform process, the EU stands by her side, to support and assist with both advice and financial resources.

Ukraine is a European country, and we share basic core values, on which we build our societies. Democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights are the core values we share and strive to implement in practice. We also discussed the importance of guaranteeing the independence of the judiciary and the freedom of the media.

Over the past years, Ukraine has received considerable respect for the consolidation of democracy and the freedom of speech. Ukraine's legacy as an open society is an important one, and needs to be further built upon.

P R E S S

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The local elections of 31 October are important for Ukraine. Their conduct should demonstrate that Ukraine's tradition of good elections, in line with international standards, continues. I commended President Yanukovich for having sent the new election law for amendments to the parliament, and stressed the importance of the legal framework providing a level playing field for all political forces and candidates.

In terms of regional developments, we discussed the importance of close EU - Ukraine co-operation in the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict. We also noted the importance of the Russian Federation as a strategic partner for both the EU and Ukraine.

Finally, In our talks, we both looked forward to the EU - Ukraine Summit of 22 November. I welcome President Yanukovich's commitment to the on-going negotiations on the EU - Ukraine Association Agreement. It will include the most developed Free Trade Agreement the EU has ever concluded. Not only will it provide market access, but is also a fundamentally important tool for modernisation and approximation of Ukrainian laws and standards to the ones applicable in the European Union . It is important that these negotiations proceed as fast as possible. "
