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## S P E E C H

### **by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton following her meeting with German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier**

*"Frank-Walter, can I begin by thanking you for the invitation to come to Berlin. It's always an honour and a privilege to be in this wonderful city and to have the opportunity to talk with you in Berlin.*

*As you've indicated, you and I have been in discussion since the first day of your appointment and we talk regularly, at the different meetings we have and also in between. I want to thank you and your foreign ministry colleagues for the work that you have done in trying to bring solutions for this very difficult crisis at the heart of Europe, in Ukraine; a crisis for which we must try and find solutions as quickly as possible. My thoughts are with the hostages. We need to ensure as quickly as possible that a resolution to this is found.*

*We also need to continue to do two things. First of all, to make clear the unacceptable nature of what is happening in the East, to demand calm and reduction of tension and to have expectations from our colleagues in Russia to help address that as quickly as possible.*

*Secondly, we have to keep in our minds the very difficult discussions that took place in Geneva. But in many ways because they were difficult, the outcome was a good one when I read what we actually said we will try and do. This is all about trying to deescalate the situation. Not least so for Ukraine can become politically stable as it looks to elections; and economically stable so that it can make sure that its people will not fear that there will be a greater economic turmoil with all the consequences that that will bring.*

*In doing that, my responsibility is to bring together the European Union 28 nations, which we have done. Ambassadors are meeting in Brussels to consider further what we will need to*

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*contemplate; and most importantly we work with key colleagues on how we try and implement Geneva and de-escalate the situation.*

*It is absolutely vital that we do not see continuing violence. It is absolutely vital that we see occupations of buildings reduced. It is absolutely vital that we see the functioning of the Rada as a place where all representatives of Ukraine can work together. We understand very well that Ukraine is a large country where people have different expectations and views. That is why you have a parliament, people who represent those different views in that parliament. That is why it is important that Kyiv continues to look at its outreach and it is also extremely important that all of us are working together on that implementation.*

*I want also to stress the importance of the OSCE monitors; all colleagues are engaged in helping to support the OSCE mission either through people or through financial support so that they can do their job. In the discussions in Geneva the focus was very much on enabling people who can impartially help to deescalate situations in individual towns, villages, places where there is concern in order, as Mr. Steinmeier said, to facilitate the capacity of having the discussions about the future. In Geneva this was an important moment in many ways for Ukraine – there must be the opportunity for people to really debate and discuss the future together of a country with territorial integrity, but enabling them to have the kind of structure that they think will best represent not just their geography and their politics but also the aspirations that people have.*

*I hope too that, as we meet over lunch, we will talk about Bosnia and Herzegovina. I think there is much that we can do and we have announced that we want to move to a new Compact for Jobs and Growth. I also had a good and interesting meeting in Serbia this week, including addressing their new parliament, as they look to their journey towards the EU. And I also hope to debrief on the two days of preparations we had for the talks of E3+3 with Iran that will take place the week after next.*

*Thank you so much for the opportunity to be with you today!"*