

REMARKS

Remarks by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini at the joint press conference with Petro Poroshenko, President of Ukraine in Kyiv, 9 November 2015

09/11/2015

It is always a pleasure to be here in Kyiv.

As you have said Mr President, the main purpose of my visit here, apart from all the issues we have discussed, is to show that the situation in Ukraine remains top priority on the European agenda. While the European Union is focusing on what is happening at our southern and south-eastern borders with conflicts in the Mediterranean region, it is very crucial that we keep focused, united as Europeans, on the situation in Ukraine.

I have spent part of the first year of my mandate explaining that our attention to the East should not overshadow the need to work together on the south of our neighbourhood. Now I am sending a complementary message that as we focus very much on the migration crisis, on the Mediterranean, on the Middle East, we have to keep very high and top of our agenda our common work on the situation in eastern Ukraine, the non-recognition policy of the annexation of Crimea, and the reform process in Ukraine itself.

I hope that my presence here and the presence of many of my colleagues from the Commission in the coming days - I think there are going to be some four, five visits in the next weeks here from Brussels at the highest possible levels - are a concrete sign of the fact that Ukraine stays extremely high on our common agenda, because we share a path and we need to work together.

It is indeed my second visit here in one year. I was really glad to meet my friend, the President. I started my visit with meetings with civil society representatives and Crimean Tatar leaders, extremely useful and good for me, and I hope also for them in exchanging views and discussing the way forward. I am also having meetings with the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister and the Speaker of the Parliament and members of the Parliament themselves as well as then a coordination meeting with all the ambassadors of the European Union countries here in Kyiv.

Meeting with the President was not only a pleasure - like every time we meet here in Kyiv, or in Brussels or everywhere else in the world, which happens luckily quite often and in a very productive way - it was mainly a moment for us to compare notes on where we are on two main issues.

On one side - the implementation of the Minsk Agreements. We shared the assessment of the fact that we are today in a much better position than it was the case months ago, with the ceasefire finally in place and the withdrawal of weapons started. Still we have a number of important steps on which we work together, together with the rest of the international community - together with the OSCE, with working

groups, with the Normandy format that just a few days ago met on the level of the Foreign Ministers in Berlin - that I hope can open the way for further steps both on the security track and on the political one when it comes to full implementation of all points of the Minsk Agreements by all sides.

We have discussed this at length, including obviously the modalities for local elections in eastern Ukraine, on the basis of Ukrainian law and in line with ODIHR standards. Another immediate concern is access for OSCE SMM and humanitarian organisations. On these issues immediate and consistent progress is needed. We also discussed very concrete and practical work that we can do together - for example the European Union can work on something crucial like demining of some areas that could be relevant for further steps.

We also discussed at length our bilateral issues, in particular the trade part of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement that is going to be provisionally applied as of 1 January 2016. We have done a lot to start the preparation of the implementation of this agreement. We have agreed to make the most of the remaining time in order to find practical solutions to Russia's concerns over the implementation of the agreement. As you know, the European Union is facilitating the talks on this issue, as well as on the gas/energy talks.

We spent a large part of our time, of our meeting discussing the reforms - not general, theoretical issues, but very concrete ones. First of all, we stressed the need to deliver on the anti-corruption reform, which is the key to the credibility and the sustainability of all the other reforms. I discussed this at length with the President, but also with representatives of the civil society. And that is going to be key also for the implementation of the trade part of the Association Agreement, it is also one important element of our discussions on Visa Liberalisation Action Plan.

I stressed the need to have anti-corruption bodies that can start the work soon, and I know the President is fully committed to that and with the trusted leadership selected through a credible and transparent process. We have also discussed, as you mentioned, public administration reform, judiciary reform and other crucial reforms, and we are and we remain ready to support you on all these steps in a very concrete way.

I would stop here because I know we run late. We had, as always, good meetings, which also means long ones and fruitful ones, so I stop here.

Link to the video:

<http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/video/player.cfm?ref=1111621>