

Mogherini pledges continued strong EU support to Ukraine

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The European Union will continue to support Ukraine as it moves to implement important and far-reaching reforms, High Representative Federica Mogherini said today.

“Let me stress that the implementation report on the Association Agenda we published last week gives an outline of the intense and unprecedented reforms Ukraine has been carrying out across its economic and democratic system,” Mogherini said following the EU-Ukraine Association Council.

“Ukraine has taken important steps to address vital systemic challenges like corruption ... Ukraine has implemented reforms to clean up the banking system, has embarked on ambitious energy reforms, has strengthened its rule of law system. Many challenges remain, of course, and this is why this work must continue and it is crucial to move from passing legislation, which is the first very important step and setting up institutions, to full implementation of these reforms so that all Ukrainian citizens can see the benefits of these reforms.

The High Representative commended the decision to nationalise PrivatBank, which she said should help ensure that all banks in Ukraine are held to the same prudential regulatory standards, making the banking sector stronger and more resilient.

Mogherini praised the work done by the Ukrainian government, despite the ongoing problems linked to the conflict in eastern Ukraine and the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol. She called again for the full implementation of the Minsk agreements.

“Our support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity is unwavering and we will continue to not recognise the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by the Russian Federation. We have also discussed today increased EU support for the diplomatic work to find a lasting peaceful solution to the conflict in eastern Ukraine through the complete implementation of the Minsk agreements.”

Last week, EU leaders took a decision on the Association Agreement that opens the way for its full entry into force. This decision addresses concerns raised in the context of the referendum in the Netherlands, while conforming fully with the Association Agreement and the EU treaties.

The High Representative pointed to increased trade between the EU and Ukraine, also thanks to the provisional application of parts of the Association Agreement. She said that visa liberalisation for Ukraine would come into effect soon.

In the margins of today's meeting, the EU and Ukraine signed a financial agreement for the Public Administration Reform programme, with a €104 million EU contribution to support policy development, civil service and human resource management; there will also be a the new programme of €52.5 million to support the judiciary and law enforcement; and the two sides signed financial agreements for four Cross Border Cooperation programmes in which Ukraine participates.

Ukraine and the European Investment Bank today also signed agreements for up to €600 million that will allow the EIB to reach its €3 billion commitment under the EU's support package for Ukraine. This comes on top of the Cooperation Agreement between Ukraine and Europol signed last week in The Hague, with a view to combating organised crime and trafficking.

In conclusion, the High Representative said: "This is, at the end of the day, what all citizens of Ukraine were asking three years ago with the beginning of the Maidan demonstrations: a better Ukraine, a better life, a better future for all Ukrainians. And our message today, as it has been constantly in these three years is: count on the European Union to be there, at your side, to accompany this process of transformation, for making Ukraine a better country and providing a better life for all Ukrainians."