

Kyiv, 27 April 2015

Remarks by President of the European Council Donald Tusk following the EU-Ukraine summit in Kyiv

We have just concluded the 17th EU-Ukraine Summit. It was, however, the first summit taking place under the new EU-Ukraine Association Agreement. And it was also the first summit since the aggression and conflict in Donbass and Crimea erupted.

The discussion regarding the crisis in Ukraine took a lot of our time and allowed us to exchange views on the situation on the ground and what needs to be done.

We agreed that the full implementation of the Minsk agreements remains the best chance to move towards a political solution. We continue to monitor the ceasefire closely. While the level of violence has decreased since the February agreement, ceasefire violations continue on a daily basis and the OSCE is still not able to verify the withdrawal of heavy weaponry. On top of that, we are really concerned about information we are receiving that weapons are still entering into eastern Ukraine.

Our diplomatic efforts will continue. We expect the Russian Federation to take its responsibility for fulfilling its obligations, this includes withdrawing Russian armed forces and equipment. It is worth recalling that our sanctions and restrictive measures are linked to the full implementation of the Minsk agreements. We expect the urgent release of all hostages, including Nadia Savchenko.

We touched upon monitoring and security tasks. The European Union is already strengthening its support to the OSCE, but we also discussed broader issues. We know the expectations of the Ukrainian side on this issue. It will not be easy, but we will look into it. We will send as soon as possible a civilian assessment mission.

We had an exchange of views on the humanitarian situation, where efforts to bring relief to the afflicted population need to intensify. This includes legislative and institutional steps, which need to be undertaken by Ukraine. The European Union and its Member States are among the biggest contributors to the international relief efforts and we are ready to contribute further.

The Summit also offered a possibility to discuss the preparations for the Eastern Partnership Riga Summit next month. We agreed that this important event is a sign both of our continued strong commitment to this framework and to setting out our priorities for the coming years

Let me conclude by a reflection after my visit to Maidan this morning. Maidan

was a turning point for Ukraine – and also for Europe. Now, we need to make sure that it was a turning point for the better. To the benefit of all Ukrainians. I am confident that you are moving in the right direction. But I am also fully aware that there are many obstacles ahead. And let's be honest, sacrifices.

I know this from my own country, Poland, that in many ways had to go through the same, often painful process - even without an armed conflict within our borders. But I can also honestly say that there is no better alternative. The reforms, the sacrifices, the turn towards Europe and the West are worth all of it.

Let me assure you that Europe will stand by your side all the way – and assist as much as we can. That was also my key message to President Poroshenko and Prime Minister Yatseniuk today. But Europe cannot do the hard job for you. It is for you, and only for you the Ukrainian nation and its Government and Parliament, to do the hard work of reforming Ukraine. To make Ukraine a more prosperous, a more just, a more fair country. In short, a better Ukraine. Thank you.

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