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REMARKS

Remarks by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini following the meeting of the EU-Ukraine Association Council

07/12/2015

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It is a pleasure to welcome you, Mr Prime Minister, here in Brussels, only a short time after my last visit to Kyiv. I am glad to have received you and the colleagues from the government for the second meeting of the EU-Ukraine Association Council.

Important parts of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement have been provisionally applied since November last year. Today, we looked at the progress that was made since the first meeting of this Council exactly one year ago, and the priorities for the period ahead.

We are both committed to Ukraine's political association and economic integration with the European Union. The provisional application of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area as of 1 January 2016 will prove it once more.

The strong commitment of the Ukrainian authorities to reforms is impressive and we all agreed on that. As we agreed on the need for swift implementation and enforcement of new policies and legislative frameworks and further acceleration of political and economic reforms, first and foremost in the interest of the Ukrainian people that were the first, the very first ones to demand these changes in Ukraine.

We agreed that key areas of reform in the short term include the constitution, the fight against corruption, the justice system, public administration, electoral legislations, decentralisation, civilian security sector, energy, the business climate and market-oriented policies as well as public finance management. The EU stands by Ukraine to support it in its efforts in a very challenging situation and we discussed common ways to face these challenges and to continue in the path of reforms in all these key areas.

We also discussed the situation in the east of Ukraine, the developments on the ground and also the situation in the Crimean peninsula, in particular the grave human rights situation. We reconfirmed the non-recognition of the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol and we reminded that all activities linked to non-recognition should remain within the limits of the law.

We discussed also the developments in eastern Ukraine and agreed on the need for the full implementation of the Minsk agreements by all sides. We support ongoing efforts aiming at a sustainable political and peaceful solution to the conflict, notably within the Normandy format and the Trilateral Contact Group. And we had the chance to

discuss this together at the OSCE Ministerial Council just a few of days ago in Belgrade.

We welcomed the progress made by Ukraine towards visa liberalisation. We know how much this is important for the Ukrainian people. The EU encourages Ukraine to continue the efforts to fulfil the remaining recommendations, notably on anti-corruption. We are looking forward to the next progress report on the implementation of the Visa Liberalisation Action Plan, which will be published later this month.

Let me say that I am looking forward to continue to work with the Prime Minister personally, the government, the authorities in Ukraine. But also with the people of Ukraine, the civil society, with all the institutions on taking our agenda forward throughout the next year until we meet again in this forum in the Association Council.

Thank you very much.

Video: <http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/video/player.cfm?sitelang=en&ref=I113762>