

EU-UKRAINE PARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION COMMITTEE

Fourteenth Meeting

22-23 March 2010

BRUSSELS

Co-Chairmen: Mr Paweł KOWAL and Mr Borys TARASYUK

Final Statement and Recommendations pursuant to Article 90 of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement

Under the co-chairmanship of Mr Paweł KOWAL (ECR, Poland) and Mr Borys TARASYUK (Our Ukraine – People's Self-Defence) the fourteenth meeting of the EU-Ukraine Parliamentary Cooperation Committee was held in Brussels on 22-23 March 2010. The Committee exchanged views with H.E. Andriy VESELOVSKY, Head of the Ukrainian Mission to the EU, on behalf of the Government of Ukraine, Commissioner Štefan FÜLE on behalf of the European Commission and Ms Eva SREJBER, Vice-Director of the European Investment Bank.

The Parliamentary Cooperation Committee (PCC):

Internal developments in the EU and Ukraine

1. Takes note of the recent elections of the President of Ukraine, held at two rounds of vote on 17 January and 7 February 2010; further welcomes the Statement of the International Election Observation Mission on the elections in Ukraine;
2. Points out with great satisfaction a strong attention of the EU and supportive statements by EU leadership on strengthening relations with Ukraine after the presidential elections;
3. Welcomes the readiness expressed by the European Commission and the Council to work closely with the new leadership of Ukraine and to keep on supporting Ukraine's European aspirations and helping Ukraine towards that bid through economic and practical measures, including the set of measures and joint activities, which are set out by the EU-Ukraine Association Agenda, and the Eastern Partnership in particular;
4. Supports the call, made by the European Parliament in its Resolution of 25 February 2010, for a stable and democratic Ukraine, where the principles of the social market economy, the rule of law and human rights are in respect, political stability and economic development are solid, internal reforms yield results, and European integration endeavor is vibrant;

5. Takes into account that the new President of Ukraine paid his first foreign visit to Brussels; express its hope, in this regard, that the European integration of Ukraine will remain at the top of the agenda of the new Ukrainian authorities;
6. Stresses that, regardless obvious achievements, certain improvements are still needed to enhance the electoral system and practice in Ukraine and to generate more confidence in the political system, and, thus, calls for a due attention to concerns raised by international observers over the campaign financing rules and a unified election code, which is in need of being created before holding the next elections;
7. Encourages all political forces in Ukraine to build up confidence and common approach to effectively counter the continuing economic recession, to proceed along the way of socio-economic, judicial and constitutional reforms, to establish a viable and efficient system of checks and balances, to define a clear distribution of competence between the President, the Cabinet of Ministers and the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, and, on this basis, to push European integration agenda of Ukraine decisively forward;
8. Welcomes the entry into force of the Lisbon treaty as from 1 December 2009, which gave the European Union a stronger leadership and the European Parliament a greater role to play, in foreign affairs in particular, and, thus, appraises the recognition by the European Parliament in its resolution of 25 February 2010 of Ukraine as a European State, which, pursuant to Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union, may apply for membership of the EU like any European state that adheres to the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law;
9. Believes that, following the accomplishment of the institutional reform, the EU shall improve its absorption capacity, while EU-Ukraine relations shall receive a stronger push for greater convergence and integration;

Political association and economic integration between Ukraine and the EU

10. Welcomes the results of the XIII Ukraine-EU Summit on the 4th of December 2009 in Kyiv (Ukraine) and, particularly, the 3rd joint progress report on negotiations on the Ukraine-EU Association Agreement, which noted the substantial further progress achieved in the year 2009, and stresses on the forward-looking, ambitious, innovative and comprehensive nature of the future Agreement as it shall be;
11. Calls for the Association Agenda to be fully implemented in order to lead to the completion of negotiations on the Association Agreement as soon as possible, bearing in mind that the quality and viability of the agreement should prevail; thus, welcomes the successful start of the implementation of Association Agenda and the work, which is being done by the Joint Committee at Senior Officials Level of the EU-Ukraine Association Agenda;

12. Emphasizes on the need of the deepening of co-operation between Ukraine and the EU in the trade and economic sphere as integral part of the future Association Agreement, and encourages both sides to work closely together within the ongoing negotiations on a deep and comprehensive Free Trade Area and the EU to extend four freedoms to Ukraine;
13. Believes that the implementation of the Joint Declaration adopted at the 2009 International Investment Conference on the modernization of Ukraine's GTS is able to enhance energy cooperation between Ukraine and the EU and to effectively strengthen security of energy supply to Ukraine and the EU, and looks very much forward to explicit commitment of the new leadership of Ukraine and its Government to the agreement reached;
14. Stresses on the importance of insuring the reliable energy transit assured by Ukraine and integration of its energy sector into EU energy internal market, and, thus, welcomes both the approval of Ukraine's accession to the Energy Community Treaty by the Energy Community Ministerial Council in Zagreb (Croatia) on 18 December 2009 and reconfirmation of the President of Ukraine at his first visit to Brussels to pursue reforms in the energy sector in accordance with the EU legislation;
15. Further calls on the new leadership of Ukraine to finalize the process of accession of Ukraine to the Energy Community Treaty and to adopt a new law on internal gas market, which complies with EU directive 2003/55/EC;
16. Stresses the need for Ukraine to go on with reforming its internal electricity market and other energy sectors in order to meet European standards and to allow for a greater competition and, thus, reiterates its call for that the finalization of synchronization of the United Energy System of Ukraine with ENTSO-E grid will contribute to common European energy security;
17. Reiterates the importance of further bilateral cooperation on climate change and a deeper co-operation on environment protection, and, thus, looks forward to further progress on the establishment of a Regional Environmental Centre in Ukraine to contribute to resolving environmental problems in Ukraine and in the neighboring countries, as well as to create the conditions for a secure environment in the whole region;
18. Underlines its strong support to the process of setting up a representation of the European Investment Bank (EIB) in Kyiv and stresses the importance of further extending the EIB financial support of the project in Ukraine;
19. Encourages both European Parliament and the European Council to take as soon as possible a positive decision concerning allocation of the second tranche of the EU macro-financial assistance to Ukraine;

Visa liberalization and visa free dialogue between Ukraine and the EU

20. Calls for strong commitment of the EU and Ukraine to the existing visa dialogue between the Parties and, following the progress in the implementation of the visa facilitation and readmission agreements, reiterates its call to amend the visa facilitation agreement in order to attain further facilitations, in particular, by extending the categories of Ukrainian citizens benefiting from the visa facilitation agreement and finding appropriate solutions to introduce a facilitated general visa procedure towards the Ukrainian nationals in view of the new EC legislation in the area of visas;
21. Calls on the EU and its Member States to apply the Visa Code in such a way to make the application for and delivering of visas as quick and easy as possible for those applying and to minimize the use of any other processing fees;
22. Welcomes the interim report elaborated by the PCC Working Group on the visa policy between the EU and Ukraine, expects a final report to be worked out as soon as possible and calls on the European Parliament and the Verkhovna Rada to consider the final report at their plenary sessions; further calls all Member States to ensure implementation of the Visa facilitation agreement to a full extent and continuously improve administrative procedures while issuing visas for Ukrainian nationals;
23. Welcomes the progress in the visa dialogue aiming at establishing a visa free regime as agreed at the EU-Ukraine Summit on 4 December 2009; underlines the need to work out measures in order to prepare a roadmap setting up clear conditions and requirements to be met by Ukraine in order to establish a visa free regime for Ukrainian citizens, as discussed during the first visit of the President of Ukraine to Brussels and his meeting with the President of the European Commission; calls in this regard on both the European Commission and Government of Ukraine to declare their position regarding possible launching this roadmap as soon as possible as this step will stimulate both parties concerned to intensify the preparation;
24. Stresses the need for an extension of the local border traffic regime between the EU Member States and neighbouring countries, particularly with regard to Ukraine, to wider territories and calls for an amendment of the Regulation (EC) No 1931/2006 of the European Parliament and the Council of 20 December 2006 laying down rules on local border traffic at the external land borders of the Member States and amending the provisions of the Schengen Convention to extend the basic border area from 30 km up to 50 km;
25. Emphasizes on the importance of an introduction of a joint border control between Ukraine and neighbouring EU Member States. In this regard, calls on the European Commission to amend the Schengen Border Code (Annex VI) laying down the provision permitting a conclusion of bilateral agreements related to carrying out of a joint border checks on road traffic on the territory of neighbouring third countries;

Cooperation in the common neighbourhood

26. Welcomes the progress made so far within the implementation of the Eastern Partnership, in particular in light of the first Meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Eastern Partnership on 8 December 2009, and looks forward to further achievement within the Partnership;
27. Appraises the strong engagement of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine into the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly establishment and looks forward to working closely together with the aim to scrutinize the cooperation within the framework of the Eastern Partnership, and to ensure the promotion of the effectiveness of the parliamentary activities and the implementation of the EU standards and practices in Ukraine, in particular;
28. Regrets the postponement of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly launching; expresses its hope that solution appropriate for all parties concerned regarding Belarus participation will be found;
29. Takes into account the visit of the new President of Ukraine to the Russian Federation on 5 March 2010; emphasizes that there is no alternative to friendly and constructive, pragmatic and mutually-beneficial relations between the two countries, which is of interest for all Parties as well as for the European Union.
