



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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**EU-UKRAINE COOPERATION COUNCIL
EIGHTH MEETING,
BRUSSELS, 21 FEBRUARY 2005**

EU Press release

At the special EU Ukraine Co-operation Council today, the EU welcomed the appointment of a new Government and expressed support for its ambitious programme of political and economic reforms. The EU acknowledged Ukraine's European ambitions and made clear that a new commitment to democracy and reforms opened new prospects for both Ukraine and EU-Ukraine relations.

The EU underlined its commitment to support Ukraine at this crucial moment. The Union stressed that work on the EU-Ukraine Action Plan endorsed by the Co-operation Council should begin immediately and presented additional measures (annex) agreed earlier today by the Council in order to strengthen and enrich the Action Plan.

The EU was represented by Mr Asselborn, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg, High Representative Solana, Commissioner Ferrero Waldner, and UK Minister for Europe MacShane. Deputy Prime Minister Rybachuk led the Ukrainian delegation.

P R E S S

In order to further strengthen and enrich the Action Plan, the following measures have been agreed in support of a democratic and reform-oriented Ukraine:

- To initiate early consultations on an enhanced agreement between EU and Ukraine, to replace the Partnership and Co-operation Agreement at the end of its initial ten-year period, as soon as the political priorities of the ENP Action Plan have been addressed.
- To explore possibilities for closer co-operation in the area of foreign and security policy, including European Security Defense Policy, and to address in particular issues of regional stability and enhanced co-operation in both crisis management and non proliferation. The EU is ready to intensify cooperation with Ukraine on the settlement process to solve the Transnistrian conflict in Moldova. Ukraine should be invited, on a case by case basis, to align itself with EU positions on regional and international issues.
- To deepen trade and economic relations between EU and Ukraine. Work on agreements for steel and textile products for 2005 will be intensified. The review of the existing feasibility study on establishing a Free Trade Area between Ukraine and the EU will be accelerated with a view to enable an early start of negotiations once Ukraine has joined the World Trade Organisation (WTO).
- To lend further support to Ukraine's WTO accession and to offer Ukraine continued assistance in meeting the necessary requirements.
- To grant 'Market Economy Status' to Ukraine, as soon as the limited remaining issues have been satisfactorily resolved. The EU will intensify contacts with Ukraine in order to resolve these issues.
- With regard to negotiations to be held between the EU and Ukraine before the next EU-Ukraine summit, options should be considered in which way and in which framework the granting of visa may be facilitated while complying strictly with security requirements. In this context, progress in the ongoing negotiations on an EC-Ukraine readmission agreement will remain essential. The EU will continue to assist Ukraine in implementing the JHA Action Plan and the scoreboard.

- To enhance co-operation in key sectors, including energy, transport, environment and health as well as in private sector development. Preparations will be made for a high-level dialogue on energy and related issues and the environmental dialogue will be upgraded. Ukraine will be treated as a priority country in the ongoing preparations for the extension of Trans-European Networks.
 - To step up support to the process of legislative approximation, including technical assistance and twinning to meet EU norms and standards and targeted advice and support legislative approximation through a mechanism such as TAIEX. Further efforts will be made to conclude bilateral agreements on the co-ordination of social security.
 - To welcome and increase people-to-people contacts, including in the key areas of youth and education, through measures such as priority access to the Erasmus Mundus programme, reinforced participation in the Tempus programme, support to Ukraine's efforts to work towards convergence in higher education by participating in the Bologna process, considering the possibility of offering internships for young professionals, and continued support to independent media. Efforts in the field of democracy and rule of law will be an immediate imperative and further targeted assistance including support for the strengthening of civil society, is already envisaged.
 - To maximise access to funding from the European Investment Bank (EIB). After final endorsement of the ENP Action Plan, up to € 250 million of EIB lending could be made available to Ukraine.
 - To provide increased assistance to Ukraine through the relevant instruments in order to help Ukraine to pursue the reform process.
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