



## Spanish Presidency of the European Union

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### EU statement in response to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, H.E. Mr. Kostyantyn Gryshchenko

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The European Union warmly welcomes the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, H.E. Kostyantyn Gryshchenko, to this meeting of the Permanent Council and thanks him for his address.

The EU recognises the particular importance Ukraine has for the European Union and for the overall stability and democratic development of the region. The EU stands ready to further support Ukraine's efforts in implementing reforms to develop a stable, prosperous and democratic country.

The EU once again acknowledges Ukraine's European aspirations and welcomes Ukraine's European choice. The EU remains strongly committed to the enhancement of the process of political association and economic integration with the European Union, as underlined during the EU-Ukraine Cooperation Council that took place in Luxemburg on 15<sup>th</sup> June. In this regard, we welcome Ukraine's stated ambition for progress in negotiations

on the new EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, including a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area as an integral part. Furthermore, the EU-Ukraine Cooperation Council has welcomed the decision to move the dialogue on the establishment of a visa free regime as a long term perspective, into an operational phase.

At the same time we look forward to Ukraine's continuing engagement in the Eastern Partnership as it provides valuable opportunities to further strengthen the relationship between the EU and Ukraine and with other Eastern Partnership countries.

The EU underlines the importance of Ukraine continuing to consolidate its democratic development, respect for human rights, including those of persons belonging to national minorities, and the rule of law and by guaranteeing media freedom and the freedom of assembly. For the EU, these are core values. Recently, there have been increasing reports on attempts to restrict the freedom of the media. In this regard, the EU welcomes recent positive statements on freedom of the media by your President. The EU regards them as a sign of the importance that Ukraine attaches to media freedom, and we encourage the government of Ukraine to continue ensuring that media pluralism and OSCE media freedom commitments are fully respected.

The EU welcomes the fact that presidential elections were conducted broadly in accordance with international standards. The EU believes that further strengthening of electoral procedures and practices as well as full and early implementation of OSCE/ODIHR recommendations would make an essential

contribution to the consolidation of democratic progress in Ukraine. In particular, the EU encourages Ukraine to continue its efforts towards adoption of a unified electoral code. In the case of local elections which have been postponed, we believe the constitutional timeframe should be duly respected.

The EU fully supports Ukraine's effort to bring its legal system, and the judiciary in particular, in line with international standards and OSCE commitments. In this regard, we encourage Ukraine to take full account of the advice given by the Venice Commission on the judiciary. We applaud the anti-corruption reform, adopted last year and look forward to its efficient enforcement.

In the same vein, we would like to underline the importance of the implementation of Ukraine's international commitments under the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture (OPCAT), including through the development of national preventive mechanisms.

The EU and Ukraine co-operate closely in all three OSCE dimensions. One of the principal instruments of this co-operation is the OSCE Project Coordinator in Ukraine. The EU is pleased that Ukraine continues to enjoy very good relations with the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine and notes with satisfaction the high interest of governmental institutions and civil society in the Project Co-ordinator's activities and projects.

We listened with interest to Minister Gryshchenko's announcement about the availability of Ukraine to assume the Chairmanship of the OSCE in the year 2013. We welcome

Ukraine's aspirations to play a leading role in the OSCE and its pledge to promote and respect our shared values, principles and commitments.

The EU appreciates Ukraine's active and constructive engagement in the settlement process of the Transnistrian conflict, on the basis of full respect of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova. We stress the need for the early resumption of formal meetings in the 5+2 format negotiations without preconditions and note the importance of full transparency in order to foster an atmosphere of trust conducive to a sustainable settlement. In this context, we welcome Ukraine's continuing support to the EU Border Assistance Mission.

There are many challenges we need to face together, particularly in the area of Transnational Threats. The EU believes that Ukraine's efforts in the field of fight against trafficking in human beings, drugs and cyber-crime is of utmost importance to the stability and security of the whole OSCE region. We also highly appreciate the importance of Ukraine's active role on such important issues as energy security dialogue and promoting the OSCE profile on the security implications of climate change. The OSCE's comprehensive approach to security, its broad participation and geographical scope as well as flexible structures provide the most pertinent platform for such a dialogue.

Mr. Minister,

You are visiting us when participating States are about to decide on their future course of action at the forthcoming Almaty informal Ministerial meeting and at a possible summit, drawing from the progress made so far in the Corfu Process. Our strategic goal is to restore trust and confidence between States in the OSCE area and to ensure the security in Europe and the security of Europe. We consider your contribution today as a valuable input to this effect.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, we would like once again to thank H.E. Foreign Minister Kostyantyn Gryshchenko for addressing the Permanent Council today, and wish him and his country all the best for the challenging tasks ahead.

Los países candidatos CROACIA\*, la ANTIGUA REPÚBLICA YUGOSLAVA DE MACEDONIA\* e ISLANDIA; los países del Proceso de Estabilización y Asociación y los países candidatos potenciales, ALBANIA, BOSNIA Y HERZEGOVINA, MONTENEGRO y SERBIA; los países de la Asociación Europea de Libre Comercio y los miembros del Espacio Económico Europeo, NORUEGA, se suman a esta declaración.

\*Croacia y la Antigua República Yugoslava de Macedonia siguen perteneciendo al proceso de Estabilización y Asociación.