



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna

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Statement in Response to Mr. Johannes Hahn, European Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations

As delivered by Ambassador Ihor Prokopchuk,
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,
to the 1169th special meeting of the Permanent Council,
18 December 2017

Mr. Chairman,

We join other speakers in warmly welcoming Mr. Johannes Hahn, European Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, and thank him for his comprehensive address to the Permanent Council.

Since early years after restoration of Ukraine's independence, the European integration has been a consistent strategic goal of the Ukrainian Governments representing the will of the Ukrainian people to join the European political and economic common space. The steady deepening of Ukraine-EU relations has been guided by the common values of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Attempts to invalidate the aspirations of the Ukrainian nation in the end of 2013 prompted the Revolution of Dignity when millions of Ukrainians displayed resolve and courage in standing up for the nation's right to make free choices and for the European future of the country. Today the Ukrainian people continue to pay the ultimate price while defending the country, its choice and the common values from the armed aggression of the Russian Federation.

We highly appreciate the unwavering solidarity and support of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine demonstrated by the European Union from the very beginning of the Russian aggression against my country in 2014. Of great significance for countering the aggression remain the practical steps, taken by the EU, in particular the economic and sectoral sanctions, which raised for Russia the cost of its aggressive actions and constrained its potential to advance the military invasion. It is important that the last week's European Council meeting prolonged the sanctions against Russia until 31 July 2018 and is firm in the pursuit of policy of non-recognition of attempted annexation of Crimea by Russia, including through prolongation of the "Crimean package" of sanctions until 23 June 2018. These restrictive measures are the necessary non-military instruments to make Russia stop its aggression, which is the major threat to Ukraine and Europe, to make it pull out its forces from the Ukrainian territory, implement in full the undertaken commitments under the Minsk agreements and reverse the illegal occupation of the Crimean peninsula.

We expect the European Union to maintain a sharp focus on the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, as its peaceful resolution with full respect to the norms of international law and the OSCE principles could provide new dynamics to settling other Russia-instigated and sustained conflicts in the Eastern Partnership area. We very much appreciate your personal engagement, EU Commissioner, including your visit this year to the Ukrainian city of Mariupol located near the contact line in Donbas.

Mr. Chairperson,

We attach high importance to intensive political dialogue and practical co-operation between Ukraine and the EU. This year was marked, in particular, by the 19th Ukraine – EU Summit in Kyiv in July; the 5th Eastern Partnership Summit in Brussels in November; the 4th meeting of the Ukraine-EU Association Council in Brussels in December. Whereas Ukraine's progress in pursuing a comprehensive reform agenda, in spite of severe security challenges, was recognized by the Association Council, Ukraine's ambitions and reform plans are far-reaching, reflecting upon the expectations of the Ukrainian people. We see particular benefits in further integration with the EU Energy Union and Digital Single Market, as well as establishment in the long-term perspective of a Customs Union between the EU and Ukraine.

A landmark event was the introduction of a visa-free regime for short-term travel. In 6 months, which passed since that day, over 350 thousand Ukrainian citizens made visa-free travel to the EU.

On 1 September 2017, the Ukraine-EU Association agreement took full effect, marking a new stage of political ties, economic links and promoting respect for common values.

This year our bilateral trade grew by nearly 30%, making the EU Ukraine's largest trade partner.

We highly appreciate the EU's macrofinancial and technical assistance, which support Ukraine's large-scale transformations and good-governance agenda. We welcome the readiness of the European Commission to launch a new program of macrofinancial assistance to Ukraine for 2018–2019.

Mr. Commissioner,

Peace, prosperity and co-operation in Europe and wider OSCE space depend upon respect for norms and principles, agreed in the OSCE, and the common values of democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms. They have been flagrantly violated by Russia's aggression. It remains imperative to maintain a firm position in seeking restoration of respect to the fundamentals of the rules-based security order, aiming to fulfill the vision of Europe whole, free and at peace. We look forward to continuing our close and fruitful co-operation with the EU delegation in the OSCE on the broad agenda of upholding and implementing the OSCE principles and commitments.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.