



**EUROPEAN COUNCIL
THE PRESIDENT**



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**Press remarks by Herman Van Rompuy,
President of the European Council,
following the EU-Ukraine Summit**

Today we held the 16th EU-Ukraine summit. This summit took place at a key moment in EU-Ukraine relations.

The issues we discussed witness the depth of our relationship and the great potential there is to deepen it even further. There is currently a historic opportunity to make a leap in EU-Ukraine relations by signing the Association Agreement/Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area by the time of the Vilnius Summit in November. This is the most advanced agreement of its kind ever negotiated by the European Union. It demonstrates our commitment towards Ukraine and the Ukrainian people.

We had a constructive working summit. We discussed the steps ahead in order to have the appropriate political circumstances to proceed with the signing of the Association Agreement. We focused on the three main areas where the European Union has set out specific criteria, namely selective justice, elections and Association Agenda reforms. I have underlined the European Union's call for determined action and tangible progress in these areas at the latest by May this year.

I thank President Yanukovich for presenting the actions Ukraine has taken so far to follow up on these criteria. Some steps have been taken, but we still need to see more and concrete progress. Progress in these areas are realistic and feasible, but time is very short.

We raised our continued concern over the cases of selective justice. On these matters, we conveyed our full support for the European Parliament's mission, headed by former Presidents Cox and Kwasniewski, and now look forward to a solution in the cases of selective justice. Systemic reform of the judicial system is also crucial to ensure that there will be no recurrence of selective justice.

P R E S S

Dirk De Backer - Spokesperson of the President - ☎ +32 (0)2 281 9768 - +32 (0)497 59 99 19
Preben Aamann - Deputy Spokesperson of the President - ☎ +32 (0)2 281 2060 - +32 (0)476 85 05 43
press.president@consilium.europa.eu <http://www.european-council.europa.eu/the-president>

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The EU also stressed the importance of a thorough follow up to the shortcomings of the October Parliamentary elections, including by implementing fully the recommendations of OSCE-ODIHR's final report. We will continue to pay attention to the matter of addressing the inconclusive results in the five single mandate constituencies.

Let me just add that an agreement on these crucial issues is reflected in the EU-Ukrainian Joint Statement. It is now important that Ukraine implements the reforms in order for us to be able to sign the Association Agreement/Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area at the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius.

On regional and international issues we discussed the Ukrainian Chairmanship in the OSCE, the frozen conflict in Transnistria, our relations with Russia and Belarus as well as the preparations for the Eastern Partnership summit in Vilnius later this year.

We look forward to Ukraine using its Chairmanship in the OSCE in a way that supports and strengthens the organisation institutionally. Its determination to seek progress on the settlement of frozen conflicts, and notably the Transnistrian one, has our full support.

As regards the Eastern Partnership summit the European Union strives for a successful summit in Vilnius. Both we and the Eastern Partners have to stick to commitments and continue working closely to address outstanding issues on the way to Vilnius. I encouraged President Yanukovich to take all necessary steps to show clear commitment on the reform path, as well as determination to pursue with the implementation of an ambitious Eastern Partnership agenda. The prospects for substantial deliveries at the summit are good as regards Association Agreements and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas.

Let me repeat that the European Union hopes to sign and ratify the Association Agreement with Ukraine, acknowledging its European aspiration and its European choice. Such a choice and especially the relationship it entails implies a commitment to shared values.
