



NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

Chairman's statement on NATO-Ukraine following the meeting of the North Atlantic Council with Georgia and Ukraine at the Brussels Summit

12 Jul. 2018 - | Press Release (2018) 098 Issued on 12 Jul. 2018 |

Last updated: 12 Jul. 2018 10:58

1. NATO Heads of State and Government met today with the President of Ukraine, Petro Poroshenko, to reaffirm their joint commitment to further develop their Distinctive Partnership and its contribution to a peaceful, stable and undivided Europe. They discussed the conflict in eastern Ukraine, where, for more than four years, Ukraine has defended itself against Russia's aggressive actions. Allies expressed their unwavering support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, and its right to decide on its future and foreign policy course free from outside interference, as set out in the Helsinki Final Act. NATO and Ukraine continue to call on Russia to reverse its illegal and illegitimate annexation of the Crimean peninsula, which they do not and will not recognize. NATO and Allies remain committed to providing continued support to Ukraine's reform agenda in the security and defence sector, including through the Comprehensive Assistance Package (CAP).
2. In light of Ukraine's restated aspirations for NATO membership, NATO stands by its decisions taken at the Bucharest Summit and subsequent Summits. Allies encouraged Ukraine to make the best use of the tools available under the NATO-Ukraine Commission, in particular the Annual National Programme (ANP). They welcomed significant reform progress already made, in particular with the recent adoption of the Law on the High Anti-Corruption Court and the Law on National Security. The latter Law is a welcome and important step forward in bringing

Ukraine's security and defence sector closer to Euro-Atlantic standards and practices. Allies urged Ukraine to implement the provisions of the Law in order to strengthen civilian control and democratic oversight over the security and defence sector in Ukraine, to build further capacity in command and control, planning and budgeting processes, improve military education, as well as ensure the timely reform of its security services. With regard to the Law on Education adopted by the Rada in September 2017, Allies urged Ukraine to fully implement the recommendations and conclusions of the Opinion of the Venice Commission; Ukraine has stated its willingness to do so. Allies looked forward to further progress in Ukraine's efforts to overcome significant remaining challenges and ensure the full implementation and sustainability of ambitious but necessary reforms. The success of Ukraine's reforms, including combating corruption and promoting an inclusive electoral process, based on democratic values, respect for human rights, minorities and the rule of law, will be crucial in laying the groundwork for a prosperous and peaceful Ukraine firmly anchored among European democracies.

3. Heads of State and Government welcomed progress in the implementation of the CAP over the last two years and its contribution to improving Ukraine's defence capacity and interoperability. They also welcomed the capacity building in strategic communications, as well as progress in joint projects on logistics and standardization, explosive ordnance disposal (EOD)/counter-improvised explosive devices (C-IED) and the implementation of new measures to assist Ukraine in ensuring the safety of its ammunition depots. Projects aimed at bolstering Ukraine's cyber defences, telemedicine and radioactive waste disposal were also completed successfully. The NATO-Ukraine Table Top Exercise made an important contribution to improving the resilience of Ukraine's critical energy infrastructure. NATO facilitated the participation of a Ukrainian team of wounded servicemen and women in the "Invictus Games" in Toronto in 2017. NATO and Ukraine will step up activities under the Platform on Countering Hybrid Warfare to strengthen Ukraine's ability to repeal hybrid attacks on its territory.
4. Allies and Ukraine condemned the human rights abuses and discrimination practices by the Russian de-facto authorities against the residents of the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula, including the Crimean Tatars, as well as Ukrainians and persons belonging to other ethnic, political and religious groups. They called on Russia and its de-facto authorities to grant international monitoring organisations access to Crimea and to release Ukrainian prisoners and hostages detained in Russia, Crimea and the areas of eastern Ukraine controlled by the Russia-backed militants. The leaders of NATO nations and Ukraine also expressed their concern about the use of torture and the transfer of Ukrainian citizens to prisons in Russia. Russia's ongoing militarization of Crimea, the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov poses further threats to Ukraine's independence and undermines the stability of the broader region. Leaders condemned Russia's

construction and partial opening of the Kerch Strait bridge between Russia and the illegally annexed Crimea, which represents another violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, including the infringement of its navigational rights in its territorial waters.

5. The ongoing armed conflict in eastern Ukraine, instigated and perpetuated by Russia, remains a major challenge to Euro-Atlantic security, and has produced a humanitarian catastrophe in the Donbas. This has led to the loss of more than 10,000 lives and displaced over 1.5 million Ukrainian citizens. Allies and Ukraine reaffirmed their support for the settlement of the conflict by diplomatic means in accordance with the Minsk Agreements and welcomed the efforts of the Normandy format in this regard. They urged all parties to comply fully with the commitments to which they signed up. Russia, as a party to the Minsk Agreements, bears significant responsibility in this regard. NATO and Ukraine called on Russia to withdraw its forces and to cease all political, financial and military support to the Russian-led militants in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions.
6. NATO leaders and Ukraine stressed that ensuring a comprehensive ceasefire, the withdrawal of heavy weapons, the effective monitoring and verification by the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM), the withdrawal of Russian-backed formations and heavy military equipment, as well as the disarmament of illegal groups remain the first necessary steps to de-escalate the conflict. The SMM must be allowed to fulfill its mandate and have full, safe and unhindered access throughout Ukraine, including the Ukraine-Russia state border. NATO and Ukraine called on Russia to return to the Joint Centre for Control and Coordination (JCCC) in order to ensure the facilitation of local ceasefires.
7. In this context, the Heads of State and Government of NATO and Ukraine took note of the recent discussions in the Normandy format on the way towards the full implementation of the Minsk agreements. They also discussed the prospects for a possible UN-authorized peacekeeping force in the Donbas. They emphasized that it should support and facilitate the full implementation of the Minsk agreements with a robust mandate to ensure area security throughout the entire conflict zone, up to and including the Ukrainian-Russian border.
8. Allies and Ukraine are concerned by the continued attempts by the Russian Federation to further destabilize Ukraine including the threat of the use of force, disinformation, cyber-attacks, energy blackmail, and interference in Ukraine's sovereign institutional and electoral processes. They call on Russia to desist from such actions.
9. NATO highly values Ukraine's significant contributions to Allied operations, the NATO Response force and NATO exercises. Allies welcomed Ukraine's decision to increase its contribution to the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan and the

NATO Response Force. These contributions testify to Ukraine's continued commitment to Euro-Atlantic security and increase the level of interoperability of the Armed Forces of Ukraine with NATO. Allies acknowledged Ukraine's interest in the enhanced opportunities within the Partnership Interoperability Initiative.

NATO will consider this in view of the decisions taken at the Wales and Warsaw Summits.

0. An independent, sovereign and stable Ukraine, firmly committed to democracy and the rule of law, is key to security in the Euro-Atlantic area, of which – as stated in the Charter on Distinctive Partnership – Ukraine is an inseparable part.