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16 December 2013

HE Stefan Fule,
European Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy
Bât. Berlaymont
Rue de la Loi 200
B-1049 Brussels,
Belgium

Dear Mr Fule

Ukrainians in Great Britain, along with those in Ukraine and the rest of the world, are seriously concerned about your statement to Deputy Prime Minister Arbuzov that the EU is suspending work on the Association Agreement until the Ukrainian Government can demonstrate that it is serious about signing the agreements.

We fully understand your views that there appears to be a growing gap between the words and deeds of the Ukrainian government. In spite of assurances from President Yanukovich and others that they would hope to sign the Association and Trade Agreements in the spring, the speech from Prime Minister Azarov to the Party of the Regions Rally on 14 December, the continually changing requests for short term EU funding and the government's actions do not inspire confidence that the assurance is genuine.

Nevertheless, we do not believe this is the right time for the EU to turn its back on Ukraine. Any withdrawal by the EU risks simply pushing the current Ukrainian government further towards the Customs Union – which for some in the government has always been an easier and more attractive option than the EU, given that Russia has no preconditions relating to human and civil rights. This would be a disaster for the long term future of Ukraine, not only economically, but also in terms of democracy and human rights.

The Ukrainian people have shown that their aspirations lie with a European future. The visit by Baroness Ashton last week, together with statements from many EU leaders, have helped to keep that aspiration alive, and have forced President Yanukovich and his government to pledge that they will not use further force against peaceful protesters.

The European Parliament's resolution on Ukraine noted that several channels of communication, including the European Parliament Monitoring Mission led by Presidents Pat Cox and Aleksander Kwasniewski, are open between the EU and Ukraine. These channels and others must be kept open, since without EU support and intervention, the Ukrainian people can have no confidence that the current political crisis will be resolved peacefully.

In our view, the EU must maintain an authoritative and democratic oversight of the situation in Ukraine and, in particular, should now consider seriously the question of personal sanctions against all those in Ukraine who are responsible for state violence against peaceful protesters.

We therefore call on the EU to continue working closely with Ukraine: to protect the rights of those protesting peacefully in favour of a European future; ensure that the political crisis is resolved without further violence and bloodshed; and to facilitate early signing of the Association and Trade Agreements with the EU.

Yours sincerely


Zenko Lastowiecki
President


Fedir Kurlak
Chief Executive