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16 December 2013

President Viktor Yanukovich  
Kyiv  
Ukraine

### Open letter

Dear Mr President

Ukrainians in Great Britain, along with our fellow countrymen in Ukraine and elsewhere, are seriously concerned with the direction in which you and your Government are taking Ukraine.

We have had deep concerns for several years at the erosion of human and civil rights; the level of corruption at all levels of business and government; attacks on freedom of the media; unchecked police brutality; the subversion of the judicial process for political ends; and the continuing mismanagement of Ukraine's economy. The prospect of closer integration with the European Union was, however, offering some real hope that Ukraine could become a modern European democracy which would give all its people access to improved social, educational and economic opportunities.

The failure to sign the Association and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements at the Vilnius summit demonstrated a total disregard for Ukraine's long term interests. Your government had been working towards this for well over two years, but had not raised with the EU any of the financial and economic issues which Prime Minister Azarov said were the reason for suspending work. It is quite clear that you and your government decided that giving in to Russia was an easier and more convenient path to follow than to keep faith with the EU.

Since then, you, your government and government officials have demonstrated your total disregard for democratic processes and have only damaged Ukraine's international standing. The vicious beatings of peaceful protesters, which must have been sanctioned at the highest levels, showed the international community just how far towards dictatorship you have allowed Ukraine to slide. Your judicial processes were quick to arrest and charge protesters with 'hooliganism' but it took over a week for any action to be taken against some of the perpetrators, with no criminal proceedings yet begun. Your assurances that no violence will be used against peaceful protesters came too late to carry any authority or credibility.

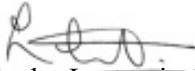
Your government has clearly shown no enthusiasm for continuing the dialogue with the EU, even though EU leaders repeatedly said that the door was open. The world is now hearing what your government really believes, with Prime Minister Azarov's speech to the Party of the Regions Rally setting out all the reasons why Ukraine should not join the EU. It appears that your government has now achieved its true intentions – to exasperate the EU to the point that they have now said they will do no further work with Ukraine until there is evidence of a genuine intention to sign the Association and Trade Agreements.

At the same time, your government appears to have no difficulty in continuing discussions with Russia – which, of course, has no concerns about the Ukrainian people's democratic and civil rights and has no problem with government corruption. Ukraine naturally has to have good economic relationships with all its neighbours, but its current difficulties arise from your government's economic and political incompetence, not from the prospect of closer ties with the EU.

If Ukraine moves closer to an agreement to join the Customs Union, rather than the EU, you and your government will have betrayed the legitimate interests of Ukraine's people. The protests currently taking place in Ukraine and around the world will intensify and you will release a wave of opposition that you will not be able to appease.

We believe that the only answer for Ukraine is to recognise that you and your government have no international credibility and have lost the confidence of Ukraine's people. You and your government should resign and call early elections, so that Ukrainians can vote for a government which they believe legitimately and honestly represents their interests and not the personal interests of a small and corrupt ruling elite.

Yours sincerely



Zenko Lastowiecki  
President



Fedir Kurlak  
Chief Executive

cc. The Rt Hon William Hague MP, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs  
HE Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council  
Jose Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission  
HE Martyn Schulz, President of the European Parliament  
HE Baroness Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union of Foreign Affairs and Security Policy  
for the European Union  
HE Stefan Fule, European Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy  
British media