



United States Capitol

Washington D. C., United States

Strasbourg, 16 February 2017

To: Members of the Senate Ukraine Caucus

Members of the Congressional Ukrainian Caucus

Dear colleagues and friends,

As Members of the European Parliament, Members of the Delegation to the EU-Ukraine Parliamentary Association Committee and Members of the Informal Group of Friends of European Ukraine, we are writing to you to communicate our keen desire to continue working together in order to maintain and strengthen the long standing transatlantic partnership between the United States and the European Union.

It would certainly seem that, in the current political climate, the transatlantic relationship – a partnership that has been so beneficial for those on both sides of the Atlantic over the course of the last 70 years – is currently at risk of being undermined. With a view to weakening and dividing our respective societies, external pressure has been brought to bear on the common values as well as on the objectives and hopes shared by both Europe and the United States.

Certainly, the present international climate is characterised by multiple strains and conflicts but the way forward is not to build walls, to close borders or to divide into opposing camps. Instead, it has been by working TOGETHER that both the United States and the European Union have been – and still are – able to pursue exemplary, effective and successful international objectives. It is only by continuing to work TOGETHER that we will be able to withstand the challenges that the transatlantic partnership is currently confronted with.

Since February 2014, the people of Ukraine have seen Crimea illegally occupied and annexed. Ukrainians have reacted to this difficult period with exceptional dignity, courage and devotion to their national values. Had the United States and the European Union not taken – TOGETHER – a resolute stand in defence of the country's territorial integrity, sovereignty and the ideals expressed at the Maidan, this task would have been made all the more difficult.

Today, fighting in the east of Ukraine has intensified once again and military and civilian casualties are counted in dozens, the wounded in hundreds. Thousands of Ukrainians live in fear of having their electricity, heating and water cut off whilst almost two millions still find themselves in temporary homes and shelters across Ukraine after fleeing the occupied territories of Crimea, Donetsk and Luhansk. Confronted with the real risk of a humanitarian catastrophe, European Ukraine looks to us – the United States and Europe – to act decisively and conjointly.

Indeed, in blatantly violating the Minsk Agreements and doing so at this particular stage, the Kremlin and its mercenary forces are pursuing a logic of divide and rule. Our ability to resist this strategy is a real test for transatlantic solidarity and of our capacity to offer the people of Ukraine something other than mere promises as they seek our aid in the peaceful development of their country. Acting individually, by striking a deal with President Putin, it is impossible for the United States or any one of the European states – or a group of European states – to bring peace to Ukraine. The very attempt to broker such a deal will merely be seen as weakness on the part of the West and will only stoke the fires of Kremlin aggression.

Instead, if Putin wishes to find his place amongst the international community, if he wishes sanctions to be lifted, he must withdraw completely from both Ukraine and from Georgia. Putin must fully respect Russia's international commitments and obligations, including the Helsinki Final Act and the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances. In the process, Putin must recognise the right of each and every state to choose its own future and, to this end, it is necessary that he shuts down his propaganda machine and the army of internet trolls and hackers that he has brought into being. At the same time, the Russian president must also restore the rule of law in Russia itself and stop the persecution of his political opponents as well as free media and human rights defenders.

Consequently, we, Members of the European Parliament, appeal to you, our American colleagues and friends in the Congress, to work with us in doing our utmost – TOGETHER – to

ensure that Ukraine is able to embark on a process of peaceful development towards prosperity and security. To this end, we should like to invite you to consider jointly organising in the European Parliament a high level conference on Ukraine. The object of the conference would be to assess the progress that has already been made by Ukraine and how best we in Europe and the United States might continue our joint support for the country. Such a meeting would complement the celebration of the granting, in May or June of this year, of a visa-free travel to Ukrainian citizens within the EU Schengen area.

It is essential that we stand strong, firm and united in defence of Ukraine, of Europe and of America. Mindful of the motto “United we stand, divided we fall”, we also remember the motto associated with Tadeusz Kosciuszko, a hero of the Polish-Lithuanian Uprising against the Russian occupation, an active participant of the American War of Independence and a close friend of an American Founding Father Thomas Jefferson. This motto was: “For our freedom and yours”.

Yours respectfully,

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