



EU-Ukraine cooperation: key events in February, 2013

EU-UKRAINE SUMMIT: KEY POINTS OF THE JOINT STATEMENT



EU-Ukraine summit, Brussels, Feb. 25

The leaders of the European Union and Ukraine meeting at their annual summit in Brussels on Feb. 25 have reaffirmed their commitment to sign the already initialed Association Agreement, as soon as Ukraine shows *"tangible progress in the three areas emphasized at the 2011 EU-Ukraine Summit."*

The Joint statement of the summit contained, in particular, the following points:

On the Association Agreement: "The leaders reaffirmed their commitment to the signing of the already initialed Association Agreement, including a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area, as soon as determined action and tangible progress are demonstrated in the three areas emphasized at the 2011 EU-Ukraine Summit, possibly by the time of the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius in November 2013."

On macro-financial assistance: "The leaders welcomed the signature of the Memorandum of Understanding and Loan Agreement for EU Macro-Financial Assistance to Ukraine of up to €10M which will complement a future agreement between Ukraine and the International Monetary Fund."

On the elections: The leaders "agreed on the importance of follow up to electoral irregularities, including early steps to establish a reliable electoral legislation by giving consideration to an Election Code and clear rules for balanced media access for electoral competitors, in close consultation with the OSCE/ODIHR and the Council of Europe/Venice Commission, as well as addressing the inconclusive results in single mandate constituencies."

On the judiciary: The leaders "looked forward to an early indepth review of the laws and legislation on the functioning of the Prosecutor's Office, on the role of the High Council of Justice, on the Judicial System and the Status of Judges as well as a reform of Criminal Code and the Police, in close consultation with the Council of Europe/Venice Commission."

On the Association Agenda: The leaders "stressed the importance of overall reinforcement of its implementation and its early update."

On the free trade area: "The leaders agreed on the importance of progressing on reforms needed to prepare for a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) in line with the Association Agenda and the need to refrain from any measures going against the spirit of the DCFTA. They reiterated their full commitment to the principles of rule-based bilateral liberalisation embodied in the DCFTA, in particular by refraining from introducing protectionist measures."

On energy: "The leaders noted with satisfaction that since November 2012, Ukraine has been connected to the EU gas market through effective bi-directional gas flows. Recent investments by European energy companies in Ukraine were considered a positive development to link Ukraine to the European market."

On the common aviation area: "The leaders noted that the finalization of negotiations on a Common Aviation Area Agreement will be a priority for 2013."

On visas: The leaders "paid particular attention to citizens' mobility, recalling the shared commitment to move towards a visa-free travel regime in due course, provided the conditions for well-managed and secure mobility are in place. They took positive note of Ukraine's progress in the implementation of the first phase of the Action Plan on Visa Liberalisation and the increased efforts towards fulfillment of the benchmarks."

Read the [full Joint Statement](#)



FÜLE: WE PUT DOWN THE WALL BETWEEN EASTERN PARTNERSHIP AND THE EU MEMBERSHIP PERSPECTIVE



Stefan Füle, EU Commissioner for enlargement and the European Neighbourhood Policy

Štefan Füle, EU Commissioner for enlargement and the European Neighbourhood Policy, visited Kyiv on February, 7, addressing **members of Ukraine's Cabinet of Ministers** and the **Verkhovna Rada** (the Ukrainian Parliament). Answering questions from civil society and students at Kyiv-Mohyla Academy he made the following remarks:

On Ukraine's EU Membership perspective: A couple of years ago there was no connection between Eastern Partnership and the eventual EU membership perspective. This has changed with the new Neighbourhood Policy. In the new policy we tried to define an endgame of this partnership. The only logical decision with regard to our Eastern neighbourhood was to commit ourselves to what the Lisbon Treaty says, and article 49 says that any European country, promoting the values and the principles the EU is founded on, can become an EU member state.

Therefore, we put down the wall between Eastern Partnership and the perspective of membership. However, make no mistake: there is an extremely long way between these two.

The EU membership perspective is the most powerful tool to transform whole countries and regions. But today we are far from that goal. And I hope that the Vilnius summit [in November 2013] will make another step towards it.

On the Association Agreement: The Association agreement is much more than another free trade agreement. It is opening a door to a large portion to the European Union *acquis*. But it also provides Ukraine with access to EU policies in various areas.

On a provisional application of the Association Agreement. This is something we can do if the relevant parts of the agreement fall in the exclusive competence of the European Commission, or are part of the shared competence with the Member States. Under normal circumstances provisional application can mainly cover the technical aspects of trade. We are looking for ways of proposing such a package of provisional application which would cover not only technical and trade-related issues, but also some important issues related to the rule of law, strengthening of democracy, fundamental freedoms. The provisional application can enter into force within a few weeks or months after signing the agreement, while the ratification process [by all EU Member States] might take one-and-a-half or two years.

Read the full article: <http://euukrainecoop.com/2013/02/08/fuele/>

EU COMMISSIONER DAMANAKI: «WE NEED MORE SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION ON BLACK SEA ISSUES»

The European Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Maria Damanaki visited Ukraine on Thursday 14 February to discuss Black Sea regional cooperation. In Kyiv, Ms Damanaki met with the Ukrainian Prime Minister, H.E. Mr Mykola Azarov, Minister of Ecology, H.E. Mr Oleh Proskuriakov, Deputy Minister for Infrastructures, H.E. Mr Volodymyr Korniienko, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Andrii Olefirov, and the Chairman of the State Agency for Fisheries, Mr. Victor Dronyk.

At the end of her visit, we talked with Ms Damanaki about major EU-Ukraine cooperation prospects in maritime and fisheries policies.



Maria Damanaki, the European Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries

Commissioner, let me start with the Black Sea Synergy initiative launched in 2008. In June 2012, in Istanbul, you said you intended to "revitalise" it. What are the priorities of this renewal?



The Black Sea Synergy was an initiative of the European institutions developed a few years ago. For the time being we have elaborated just the environmental pillar [and] today we can try to have some concrete results. We are also trying to expand this pillar to some other fields. That's why during my meeting with Ukrainian authorities I have mentioned the need to boost our scientific cooperation – for example, focusing on development, coastal transport, tourism, etc.

The first step is to create a common database, which would reflect the situation of natural resources, stocks on the sea basins etc. For the moment we have separate databases developed by different countries, and they are sometimes incompatible.

Read the full article: <http://euukrainecoop.com/2013/02/15/damanaki/>

EU HELPS BOOST UKRAINE'S VOCATIONAL EDUCATION



Participants of the opening ceremony

The EU and Ukraine are launching a new initiative to help modernise Ukraine's legislative standards and principles of education and training – bringing them in line with EU policies. The EU-funded Lifelong Learning Twinning Project* was presented to the public on Feb. 19 in Kyiv to assist Ukraine in developing quality assurance and implementing a system of standard qualifications (the National Qualifications Framework) for vocational education and training.

With a budget of more than **€1.4 million** for 2013-2014, the project will focus on strengthening the capacity of the *Ministry of Education, Science, Youth and Sports* to improve relevant Ukrainian legislation. Together with its European partners, Metropolitan University College (Denmark), AARHUS Tech (Denmark) and the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) (Germany), the Ministry will also work in close cooperation with other Ukrainian stakeholders and social partners.

Maria Juríková, the deputy head of the EU Delegation to Ukraine, recalled that the EU-Ukraine Association Agenda includes several priorities on vocational education and training. This related Twinning project works to “move forward the Association Agenda and relevant reforms, strengthen the Ministry's institutional capacity and its cooperation with the stakeholders and social partners,” she explains.

Borys Zhebrovsky, Ukrainian project leader and the deputy minister of education, confirms that Ukraine has started the process of reforming its vocational education and training sector. “In that regard, this is the right moment to launch this project,” Zhebrovsky stresses.

“This year the Ministry, together with Ukrainian employers, is planning to work out modern standards of education for 46 professions,” recounted **Viacheslav Suprun**, director of the Vocational Education and Training Department of the Education Ministry.

According to **Søren Bo Poulsen**, an international expert representing AARHUS Tech in Denmark, the project will make “concrete and comprehensive suggestions on how to implement the already established National Qualifications Framework.”

Susanne Gottlieb, EU project leader (University College Metropolitan) believes that the project will have a positive impact on the workforce in Ukraine. “In Ukraine, you will have attractive jobs for young people, so they could stay in Ukraine and not go abroad to earn money,” Gottlieb emphasises.

As a result, better vocational training will help educate more high-skilled workers who will be able to find better jobs in Ukraine, experts conclude.

Background



Twinning projects bring together Ukrainian and EU member states (MS) and public bodies to share expertise and best practices in the work towards agreed reforms. The Ukrainian institution, together with an EU member state civil servant called the Resident Twinning Adviser (RTA) who is based in the institution, runs workshops, training sessions, expert missions and counselling to improve citizen services and the legal framework by modelling successful European practices.

52 Twinning projects have been undertaken in Ukraine and 22 have already successfully concluded. This Twinning is the first involving the Ministry of Education, Science, Youth and Sports.

* "Modernisation of legislative standards and principles of Education and Training in line with the EU Policy in Lifelong Learning"

UKRAINE'S ENERGY SPECIALISTS TO GET BUSINESS EDUCATION THANKS TO EU-FUNDED INITIATIVE

An EU-funded initiative, *MBA Programme for Ukraine's State Agency on Energy Efficiency and Energy Saving (SAEE)* was presented on Feb. 19 in Kyiv. The programme is specially tailored for Ukrainian civil servants, providing the possibility of enhancing their existing level of education and acquiring new knowledge and skills. Thanks to this project, 24 civil servants from the State Agency will obtain master degrees in Business Administration (MBA).

The MBA Programme meets all Ukrainian and international educational standards. It includes typical the MBA curriculum as well as specialised courses related to energy efficiency, energy saving and renewable energy sources. **Iryna Tykhomyrova**, president of the *IMI-Kyiv Business School* thinks that the initiative "is an example of a public-private partnership in implementing programmes that meet international standards."



Participants of the Opening Ceremony of the international "MBA programme for State Agency on Energy Efficiency and Energy Saving of Ukraine (SAEE)"

Iryna Tykhomyrova, President of the *IMI-Kyiv Business School*, and **Jan Tombiński**, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Ukraine

This programme has resulted from long-term cooperation with European professors. It is aimed at promoting the successful implementation of energy-efficient practices in Ukraine. Because of this, some of the courses will be taught by representatives from the EU member states, adds Tykhomyrova.

According to **Jan Tombiński**, *head of the Delegation of the European Union to Ukraine*, the EU invests in educating people who have professional experience. The EU is helping Ukraine to make the best use of the country's potential. In the future, "you will profit from your skills to manage your energy resources in the best way," Tombiński adds.

Sergiy Dubovyk, deputy head of the *State Agency on Energy Efficiency and Energy Saving*, believes that this programme will increase the skills of civil servants. They will get a deeper understanding of business mechanisms and financial management, which will be useful in tackling the issue of energy efficiency in the private sector.

Mr. Tombiński adds that Ukraine has all the means to be one of the key players in the energy market. However, the country's energy sector has a lot of room for improvement, he says. The project will contribute to this improvement, he concludes.

Background

The "*MBA Programme for State Agency on Energy Efficiency and Energy Saving of Ukraine (SAEE)*" initiative is launched with the support of the European Union within the framework of the "Capacity Building of SAEE" project, which is implemented by the consortium led by Hulla & Co. Human Dynamics KG, Austria. The MBA programme will be delivered by IMI-Kyiv Business School.



YEVHEN ZAKHAROV: HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION IN UKRAINE NEEDS SYSTEMATIC IMPROVEMENTS

A new EU-Ukraine Cooperation project, worth €210,000, is helping to protect human rights in Ukraine and to fight ill-treatment and torture in places of detention. We interviewed Yevhen Zakharov, a well-known Ukrainian human rights activist and the leader of the project, about the human rights situation in Ukraine. Zakharov is co-chairman of the Kharkiv Human Rights Group and head of the board of the Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union.*



Yevhen Zakharov, co-chairman of the Kharkiv Human Rights Group and head of the board of the Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union

What can you tell us about the human rights situation in Ukraine since 2010? Has it improved or gone downhill? What human rights in particular have been affected?

I don't see significant improvements with any human rights in Ukraine. Instead, the situation of fundamental freedoms has worsened. Notably, freedom of speech and information, freedom of opinion and assembly and freedom of conscience and religion have declined. The situation with economic, social and cultural rights has worsened. Freedom of entrepreneurship and right to property face setbacks.

The situation is more complex in the law enforcement field. A progressive Criminal Procedure Code was adopted. This gives hope for improvement in certain areas of criminal justice. For instance, fewer people will be kept in pre-trial detention centres.

But generally, only those things are progressing which don't contradict the political and economic interests of the authorities. On the other hand, in the field of judicial reform, for example, no recommendation included into the resolution of the *Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe* (January 2012) has been put into force.

Comprehensive judicial reform didn't take place in Ukraine. We lack independent courts. Moreover, changes are needed in the work of the *Supreme Council of Justice* and principles of its organisation.

How can the situation be changed at the public policy level?

Ukraine needs systematic changes in all domains. Legislation has to be changed: the new Criminal Procedure Code only partially solves this problem. It still has to be implemented. For instance, it is important to eliminate "shadow" detentions [*when a suspect is detained without full evidence, and the police is "working" with him or her in the detention centre to obtain evidence, often using ill-treatment*]. It is essential that courts exclude evidence obtained in this way. After all, it is considered a violation of a constitutional right: a right *not* to be a witness against oneself or against someone close.

In order to eradicate this practice, we need to move away from evaluating police performance based on the percentage of solved cases. The police officers take these actions in order to attain the required figures and avoid a reduction in their salary.

Ukraine must implement Article 127 of the Criminal Code, which imposes punishment for torture. Indeed, even in cases where law enforcement officers turn to torture and are prosecuted, the Ukrainian justice system applies other articles to the case. For example, the court might apply Article 365 of Criminal Code, which foresees punishment for abusive exercise of power or malpractice.

Read the full interview: <http://euukrainecoop.com/2013/02/26/human-rights-protection/>

BRINGING UKRAINE'S STEPPE BACK TO LIFE – INTERVIEW

Black soil is a basic element to successfully cultivate agricultural products. The EU and Ukraine are jointly supporting steppe ecosystems to restore the soil's fertility and rehabilitate Ukraine's degraded land.



We interviewed Oleg Dudkin, executive director of the Ukrainian Society for the Protection of Birds, partner of BirdLife International in Ukraine. He spoke about steppe biodiversity and possible ways to mitigate climate change. Dudkin is a manager of the Steppe Biodiversity project, which received a €1.4 million EU grant.



Oleg Dudkin, executive director of the Ukrainian Society for the Protection of Birds

What is steppe biodiversity and why is it important for people?

Steppe biodiversity refers to the whole range of living creatures existing in the steppe. We can identify the status of individual ecosystems by observing certain types of mammals, birds, insects, and plants. Unfortunately, ecosystem health is frequently compromised by human activities.

We have to remember that all food products are cultivated on land. There is no alternative way to provide people with proper nutrition, like producing synthetic products for example. The steppe is a resource that has been created over millions of years. People have been using it for 10,000 – 15,000 years, accelerating the exploitation of the resources

during the past two centuries.

What are the key problems with degraded lands in Ukraine?

At present, Ukraine has 40 million hectares of agricultural lands. One tenth of them qualify as degraded. This means that their soil has low humus content, which makes crop cultivation economically inefficient. This problem arises due to intensive farming and the water, wind or chemical erosion associated with it.

In Ukraine, 90% of land is used for agricultural purposes, compared with 50-60% in Europe overall. The optimal level is actually 40%, with the remaining 60% of land ideally being rehabilitated. At some point in the future, the productivity of agricultural land will become very low. The time required to rehabilitate land can't be compared with the rapidity of its exploitation.

Are there any EU requirements concerning these issues?

There are some requirements on environmental policy within the framework of the Association Agreement. According to EU recommendations, protected areas should make up at least 15% of the land. In Ukraine, 5.2% of land is currently protected, compared with 7% in the Netherlands and 9% in France. In other words, even developed European countries do not fully adhere to the above mentioned recommendations. However, the proportion of protected areas is still higher in these countries than in Ukraine.

A lot of land in Ukraine is wasted not due to low humus content but because it was not farmed. The current situation makes cultivation of agricultural products expensive and it is not supported by the state.

In the EU there is a Common Agricultural Policy, which provides farmers with a system of public subsidies. In Ukraine, small farms are taken over by agricultural holdings that rent land for 20-40 years. All of them want to earn the maximum profit from their agricultural activities. However, some of these holdings have already started using innovative and progressive methods of crop cultivation as well as modern fertilisation technology.

Read the full interview: <http://euukrainecoop.com/2013/03/01/steppe-biodiversity/>

Useful links:

For more information on EU-Ukraine relations, consult the following resources
<http://euukrainecoop.com/useful-links/>

Calendar of past and future events: <http://euukrainecoop.com/calendar/>