
POROSHENKO: MY VISION FOR THE UPCOMING UKRAINE-EU SUMMIT

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On Monday (8 July) the leaders of the European Union and the president of Ukraine will gather in Kiev for XXI Ukraine-EU summit.

It will be an event of a great symbolism and special significance.

Of a great symbolism because the summit will mark the fifth anniversary of conclusion of the Association Agreement, including establishing the deep and comprehensive free trade area.

For over five years we have ensured good track of its implementation and today I am glad that Ukraine and the European Union are closer than never before.

Ukraine is setting new records for export of its goods and services to the EU market, increasing the EU share in foreign trade of Ukraine up to 42 percent.

Moreover, for over five years we have been standing shoulder-to-shoulder in unity and solidarity – in restraining Russian aggression.

Our EU allies helped Ukraine to strengthen our resilience through keeping sanctions regime and assisting us on the track of reforms. Looking back, one could hardly imagine how Ukraine would survive without consistent and steady support of the Western partners.

This summit will be the last high-level political event with Ukraine for Council president Donald Tusk and Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker. That is something which makes it significantly special. They are great friends of our nation and the real founding fathers of new Ukraine-EU relations based on political association and economic integration.

Goodbye to Donald and Jean-Claude

We will definitely miss the Ukrainian language of president Tusk and delicate humour of president Juncker. A case when a new friend is not better than two old ones.

The outcome of the Kiev summit will be of great importance. With a new leadership both in Kiev and Brussels it may be the starting point and create the ambitious framework for development of Ukraine-EU relations for the next five years.

First, strong joint commitment to unity and solidarity in the context of ongoing Russian aggression

against Ukraine. More sanctions, wider in scope and stronger in impact, including decision on non-recognition of Russian passports issued in contradiction to the international law and Ukrainian legislation.

Recent goodwill initiatives of the new Ukrainian leadership on ceasefire and long-awaited disengagement in Stanytsa Luhanska have not been reciprocated by Russia.

On the contrary, only last month Ukraine lost 11 servicemen killed and about 80 wounded.

We need common approach to pushing forward the initiative of Ukraine to launch UN-led multinational mission to Donbas as well as further pressing on Kremlin to release Ukrainian citizens, including Sentsov, Sushchenko and many others, who are illegally detained in Russia.

I strongly encourage new president Volodymyr Zelenskiy to raise the issue of the creeping occupation by Russia of the Ukrainian media and to coordinate joint efforts with the EU to tackle increasing disinformation and propaganda campaign of Kremlin, aimed at undermining the political stability in Ukraine.

Second, more EU engagement in countering Russian escalation at the Kerch Strait and the Sea of Azov.

Seized sailors

Russia failed to implement the order of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea from 25 May 2019 and release 24 Ukrainian servicemen and three vessels.

The summit shall agree on further strengthening the Azov package of sanctions and ways to press Russia to ensure unhindered and free passage to and from the Sea of Azov.

It is time for the EU to deliver on the last year summit decision about assisting in social-economic reconstruction of the affected areas in Donbas and the Sea of Azov region.

Such assistance could be promoted through special EU programs as well as so called patronage mechanism of certain EU member states over districts and towns of Donbas.

Third, new political momentum in Ukraine requires a new EU approach to assisting in implementation of reform agenda, fulfilling the Association Agreement and securing macro-economic stability.

I believe it is time to take a decision on launching comprehensive multi-annual ambitious EU programme of macro-financial assistance to Ukraine.

Fourth, I call upon the leaders to take concrete steps in implementation of the initiative of the 'Four Unions', which was put on the table by Ukrainian side in 2017.

We should deliver on enhancing economic and sectoral integration and regulatory approximation in priority sectors such as digital single market, energy integration, trade facilitation, customs cooperation and Schengen acquis.

There is a need to step forward on the way to conclusion of Agreement on conformity assessment

and acceptance of industrial products (ACAA) to open new potential for increasing trade.

Ukraine should make full use of the principles and instruments of the Association Agreement with a view to ensuring gradual sectoral full-fledged integration to the EU market as well as creating favourable conditions for applying for EU membership in 2023.

Fifth, we need to push forward the gradual integration of Ukraine to the EU energy market and combine our efforts to tackle existing challenges in this area, including stopping of construction of the Nord Stream 2, reaching agreement on a new post-2019 gas transit contract between Ukraine and Russia based on EU legislation.

Sixth, protection of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity is impossible without strong military forces, which are making full use of modern technologies and operational capacities.

To this end, it is high on the agenda to step up cooperation with the European Defence Agency as well as in the framework of the permanent structured cooperation on defense (PESCO).

Last but not the least, the winning formula of the summit is "No backsliding on Ukraine-EU integration agenda". It must be a strong message for the new leadership of Ukraine and the EU for the years to come.

In the result of the summit the leaders should convert the unique public support for president Zelenskiy into unique integration agenda for Ukraine. Anything less would not be in the best interests of Ukraine and the EU.

Be ambitious, not low profile. Look beyond the present momentum. This summit should not become a mere bureaucratic exercise.

Kaynak/Source: