Enhanced agreement EC-Ukraine: negotiation mandate

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The European Parliament adopted the initiative report by Michal Tomasz **KAMISKI** (UEN, PL) on a new enhanced agreement between the European Community and Ukraine.

In so doing, it welcomes the Council's decision to open negotiations on a new agreement and calls on the Council and the Commission to take all possible steps to ensure that the negotiations started in March 2007 can continue. MEPs express their disquietude with regard to the current political tensions and call upon all actors involved to devise a comprehensive and sustainable political solution involving all parties, whilst keeping Ukraine on the path towards European integration. However, before the negotiations are concluded, the current crisis has to be peacefully resolved. The Parliament believes that the negotiations should lead to the conclusion of an Association Agreement that would allow Ukraine to use its mechanisms for further deepening of integration with the EU. Parliament is of the view that the agreement should envisage development of the relationship in progressive stages, laying down concrete conditions and timetables to be met. It demands that a review of the agreement be provided for, in order to take into account dynamic developments in Ukraine and in the bilateral relationship.

MEPs stress, with regard to the challenges Ukraine will face when implementing its commitments arising from the agreement, that advantage should be taken of the review of the 2007-2013 financial perspective and of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument planned for 2008-2009, in such a way as to increase the EU's financial assistance to Ukraine. They emphasise the importance of multilateral cooperation in the Black Sea region and call for the setting-up of an EU-Black Sea Community, along the lines of the Northern Dimension, to enhance and encourage more dialogue with a view to establishing a more stable, secure and democratic neighbourhood.

The Parliament addresses the following recommendations to the Council and asks it to instruct the Commission to take them into account when pursuing the negotiations:

- the need to further consolidate the footings of liberal democracy and strengthen democratic control mechanisms, including a strong civil society;
- fulfil their obligations under international human rights law and to exercise due diligence in securing women's rights to equality, life, liberty and security, and zero tolerance to discrimination, torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment;
- unravel political from economic powers, weed out corruption; ensure an independent judiciary and enforce anti-corruption measures;
- call on the Ukrainian authorities to fully implement the Convention against Torture;
- deepen the regular political dialogue on bilateral, regional and international issues in line with the commitments entered into by Ukraine at regional and international level; provide for Ukraine's close involvement in the Common Foreign and Security Policy, as well as in the development of regional cooperation in the Black Sea area; aim at strengthening its role in the East European region and encourage it to continue its activities focused on the promotion of stability, security and democracy, as well as of sustainable development, in the common neighbourhood, with particular emphasis on the settlement of frozen conflicts in that region;
- support free enterprise and the consolidation of the Ukrainian market economy;
- the need to set up a stable regulatory framework which would ensure the creation of a competitive market economy based on the principle of property rights, as a factor inextricably linked to Ukraine' s European perspective;
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the establishment of the Interagency Commission on Combating Illegal Acquisitions and Seizures of Enterprises lay down a concrete plan for the gradual establishment of a deep and comprehensive Free Trade Area, to be grounded on a common regulatory basis and to cover almost all trade in goods, services and capital between the EU and Ukraine and to include agricultural products as far as possible;

- that the energy sector fully complies with principles of market economy and transparency, in particular as far as prices, network access and efficiency are concerned;
- strengthen its strategic role as a transit country for supplying the EU with oil and gas, e.g. by backing a reversal of the Odessa-Brody pipeline and advocating its extension into the EU and the need to involve Ukraine in the development of the Nabucco gas pipeline project;
- strengthen Ukraine's potential as a key partner in management of migration flows and borders and envisage further joint steps in the fight against organised crime including the eventual conferment on Ukraine of 'privileged status' in relation to Europol; ensure effective implementation of visa facilitation and readmission agreements; envisage the objective of and necessary steps towards the introduction of a visa-free travel regime;
- deepen cooperation between the EU and Ukraine on environmental issues and strengthen Ukraine's capacity to tackle matters relating to air and water quality, waste management, nature protection and radiation contamination;
- call on the political leadership of Ukraine to implement the relevant provisions of the Kyoto Protocol to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change;
- provide for Ukraine's participation in Community agencies and programmes in order to increase the access of its policy-makers and experts to European networks;
- the Member States who joined the EU in 2004 and 2007 should play an active role in Ukraine's move towards the European Union, allowing Ukraine to benefit from their experience of reforms.

Lastly, the Parliament asks the Council and the Commission to keep its bodies responsible regularly and thoroughly informed of the progress of negotiations.