Strengthening the European neighbourhood policy

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UKRAINE – EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY – STATE OF PLAY

This Commission working document accompanies the Commission's communication on strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). This document reports on overall progress made on the implementation of the EU-Ukraine Action Plan. As such, it concentrates primarily on the development of EU-Ukraine bilateral relations and on issues involved in implementing the Action Plan.

Overall, the report states that with the preparation and conduct of overall free and fair parliamentary elections in March 2006, Ukraine consolidated the breakthrough in conducting a democratic election process that began with the Orange Revolution and which is also a key element of the Action Plan.

Considerable steps have been taken towards consolidating respect for human rights and the rule of law (e. g. removing pressure on the media and civil society, reform of the customs service) and a wide range of legislative reforms have been introduced. But progress is being hindered by endemic corruption, which is the main challenge to the development and economic growth of Ukraine, and by the lack of a truly independent judiciary.

Other areas of progress include:

- initial steps have been taken in the fight against corruption and on the reform of the judiciary, which are particular challenges;
- there has been good co-operation between the EU and Ukraine on foreign policy, with Ukraine aligning with EU positions on many issues;
- good progress has been made on Ukraine-Moldova border management;
- agreements on visa facilitation and readmission have been successfully negotiated and initialled;
- progress has been made in various trade and trade-related areas, including last steps in the WTO accession process, but further reforms are needed to improve the business climate;
- while progress is needed on nuclear safety issues, much progress has been achieved on energy cooperation.