

Annual implementing report on the EU association agreement with Ukraine

2019/2202(INI) - 11/02/2021 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 526 votes to 79, with 71 abstentions, a resolution on the implementation of the EU Association Agreement with Ukraine.

The EU-Ukraine Association Agreement reflects the shared ambition of the EU and Ukraine to move towards political association and economic integration that can serve as a blueprint for reform. Members stressed its importance and urged the Ukrainian authorities to keep its implementation high on their agenda despite the challenges raised by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Common values and general principles

The EU's assistance to Ukraine is subject to strict conditionality and reiterated the need for Ukraine to show a renewed commitment to reform and adherence to the EU's principles. It stressed the need to update the Association Agreement to take account of changing regulatory frameworks and economic development needs and to strengthen the monitoring mechanisms.

Members welcomed the fact that the observation missions of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR), in cooperation with the Parliament, assessed the 2019 presidential and parliamentary elections in Ukraine as generally pluralistic and efficiently managed. They welcomed the adoption of the new Electoral Code in December 2019 and called for it to be brought in line with international standards.

Reforms and institutional framework

Parliament suggested the implementation, in close cooperation with civil society, of qualitative and quantitative mechanisms to monitor Ukraine's implementation of reforms and to assess progress, in particular in the field of justice, the fight against corruption, state enterprise governance and energy reforms, which should be linked to economic and investment support.

Members supported strengthening EU-Ukraine sectoral cooperation in priority areas, such as the digital economy, energy, climate change and trade. They welcomed Ukraine's ambitions to approximate to the EU's digital single market and European Green Deal policies by implementing the relevant acquis.

The Commission is called on to update neglected areas of the agreements in policy areas such as gender mainstreaming and health crisis management and to support investments in sectors with growth potential, including sustainable energy and climate, the digital single market and cybersecurity, and transport.

Cooperation in the field of the common foreign and security policy (CFSP)

Parliament welcomed Ukraine's willingness to participate in the EU's 'Horizon Europe' framework programme for research and innovation and the research programmes of the European Space Agency (ESA). It called on the EU and Ukraine to boost cooperation in security and defence and devote particular attention to the conflict in eastern Ukraine and Russia's attempts to undermine Ukraine's territorial integrity.

Members welcomed Ukraine's involvement in certain projects in the framework of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), in particular in cooperation with the European Defence Agency (EDA), and participating in particular in permanent structured cooperation (PESCO) as long as it meets an agreed set of conditions.

Territorial integrity and Ukraine's sovereignty

While continuing to condemn the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol and the de facto occupation of certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk, Parliament called on Russia to fulfil its international obligations, to withdraw its military forces from the territory of Ukraine and to fully implement the resolutions of the UN General Assembly on the territorial integrity of Ukraine and on Crimea and Sevastopol.

Members strongly condemned Russia's destabilising actions and military involvement in Ukraine. They called on the European External Action Service (EEAS) to enhance their efforts in peaceful conflict resolution.

Human rights and fundamental freedoms

Parliament strongly condemned the large-scale and continuing violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms such as freedom of speech, religion or belief and association and the right of peaceful assembly by Russian occupying forces in the temporarily occupied territory of Crimea and by so-called separatist forces in the non-government-controlled areas of Donbas.

Members criticised, inter alia, forced conscription, deportation, forced passport issuance, restrictions on the right to education, arbitrary detention, torture and other harsh conditions of detention, as well as restrictive measures such as the unilateral closure of checkpoints and denial of access to UN and humanitarian missions, which are of particular concern in the context of the current pandemic.

Parliament called on the Ukrainian authorities to:

- continue their efforts to re-establish a fully functioning institutional architecture to fight corruption, including in the judiciary, while fully preserving the independence of the judiciary from the executive and legislative branches;
- develop a democratic, independent, pluralistic and balanced media environment in Ukraine;
- effective implementation of comprehensive secondary legislation guaranteeing freedom of belief, addressing continued discrimination against LGBTI persons, feminist activists, persons with disabilities and minorities.

Institutional provisions

Parliament called on all EU institutions, Member States and the Ukrainian authorities to develop campaigns aimed at citizens to better inform them of the benefits of the Eastern Partnership initiative and the implementation of the Association Agreement/Comprehensive and Deep Free Trade Area.

In this regard, Members welcomed the 'Civil Society Facility' programme comprising EUR 20 million, which will support the strengthening of civil society organisations' capacity to participate in decision making and public life.