



УКРАЇНА-2050
UKRAINE-2050

24 April 2020

His Excellency Mr. David Maria Sassoli
President of the European Parliament

Rue Wiertz 60
1047 Brussels, Belgium

His Excellency Mr. Charles Michel
President of the European Council

Rue de la Loi 175
B-1048 Brussels, Belgium

Her Excellency Ms. Ursula von der Leyen
President of the European Commission

Rue de la Loi 200
1049 Brussels, Belgium

Your Excellencies:

Open Letter: New Reality - the Strategic Importance of Ukraine's full membership in the EU

On behalf of NGO "Ukraine-2050", I welcome the European Commission's emergency support package for Ukraine as part of your global response to the coronavirus outbreak.

The COVID-19 pandemic will jolt the European Union (EU) into a new reality filled with numerous new challenges and unforeseen opportunities.

To successfully face this new reality the EU leadership will require clear vision, as well as the courage to act boldly and in a timely manner.

Ukraine's full membership in the EU is part of the new reality that will improve the EU's future in the best interests of all its member states.

It is noteworthy that the Head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) and a member of the Honorary Board of NGO "Ukraine-2050", His Beatitude Sviatoslav, indicated during a 6 February 2020 meeting with Ukraine's then Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, Dmytro Kuleba, that Ukraine and Ukrainians are already part of the European space because they retain their European identity and culture. The Head of the UGCC also stated that: "*We are not going to Europe, but returning to the European community of peoples.*"

Global focus on *Brexit* has clouded the fact that many more European nations wish to join the EU than to leave it, and that the EU and its ideals continue to matter to a great many people.

The Euromaidan protests of 2013-2014 and the Russian aggression Ukraine has faced as a result, demonstrated that joining the EU was, and still is, worth dying for.

Why did hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian citizens occupy the streets of Kyiv in the face of frightening odds during the Euromaidan of the winter of 2013-2014? It was to protest the decision of Ukraine's then-President to suspend the process of Ukraine's integration into the European Union.

After President Viktor Yanukovich shamefully fled the country and Ukraine's European aspirations were put back on track, the Russian Federation (RF) responded by attacking and illegally occupying Crimea and a portion of Eastern Ukraine.

At a time when *Brexit* led some to doubt the importance of the EU, Ukraine had already lost over 13,000 individuals, seen over 30,000 suffer various types of injuries and coped with over 1.5 million internally displaced persons, not to mention the incalculable negative impact on its economy as a result of defending its right to choose to sever ties with the Soviet past and to strive for Euro-integration and membership in the EU.

Rather than buckling under this pressure, on 7 February 2019, the Parliament of Ukraine voted to amend the Constitution of Ukraine to clearly set the course of the country's future. The goal of the proposed amendments, as stated in the Explanatory Note, is legislative consolidation in the highest law of the country in support of a civilizational choice – the European identity of the Ukrainian people and the irreversibility of the strategic course of the state towards Ukraine's full membership in the EU and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Other than the COVID-19 pandemic, the most impactful events of the 21st century have arguably been related to Ukraine's civilizational choice of Europe and the EU, and the RF's desperate attempts to block it. This cannot come as a surprise, for Ukraine's European past and future are a complete dichotomy to the RF's false historical narrative that brazenly attempts to propagate the myth that Ukraine and Eastern Europe belong in the RF's sphere of influence.

The EU, its founding principles and the fact they attract a growing number of Europeans do not stand in opposition to the RF. However, recent history has shown that it is the RF that stands in opposition to the EU and its ideals. The RF is threatened by the very existence of the EU and the fact that, with the exception of Belarus, every single European country that was within the RF's sphere of influence is now a member or wants to become a member of the EU.

Ukrainians have already made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of their European dreams, principles and aspirations.

Moreover, despite the blatant and persistent Russian hybrid aggression against Ukraine for over six years now, amazingly, Ukraine continues to reform in a tangible manner and remains on course in its Euro-integration process.

This was recognized in a joint press statement following the 6th Association Council meeting between the EU and Ukraine on 28 January 2020 in Brussels:

The Council welcomed the concrete results that the implementation of the Association Agreement continues to deliver for the benefit of the citizens of the EU and Ukraine. This is demonstrated, inter alia, by increasing bilateral trade, which grew by 13% the first nine months of 2019 compared to 2018.

The Association Council also welcomed the positive impact of the visa-free regime on people-to-people contacts between Ukraine and the EU, with Ukrainian citizens with biometric passports having visited the Schengen area without a visa already more than three million times.

The Association Council welcomed the reform efforts by Ukraine and the significant progress already achieved.

[...]

The EU reiterated its unwavering support and commitment to Ukraine's **independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity** within its internationally recognised borders.

[...]

The EU reaffirmed its policy of **non-recognition of the illegal annexation** of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol by Russia, including through restrictive measures.

Today, it is no longer a question of “*if*” Ukraine will join the EU, but a question of “*when*”.

The record-low oil prices, as well as the overall global macro-economic conditions, present the EU with a truly incredible opportunity to change forever the course of history, and significantly bolster European security, stability and prosperity by taking the next logical step and securing the full integration of Ukraine into the EU.

It is the perfect time for the EU and Ukraine to outline concrete steps and a timeline for Ukraine's accelerated accession to the EU.

This will obviously be a challenging process as the RF is working diligently to influence elections, hearts, minds and pocketbooks throughout the world in order to make sure that Ukraine's accession to the EU does not come about. As a result of, and in addition to the radical sources of pro-RF polemic, many mainstream elites, including influential scholars, economists and politicians will come out and criticize any attempt at Ukraine's accelerated accession to the EU. Tactics similar to those used by the RF to attempt to block the EU's ratification of the *EU-Ukraine Association Agreement* should be expected.

So why should the EU adopt this bold course? For the same reason the EU has invested so much into Ukraine's economy, society, governance, as well as Ukraine's environment and connectivity - the EU's own immediate and future self-interest - of course!

To begin with, the EU stands to gain a young, vibrant, educated and ambitious population of 43 million, supported by a worldwide diaspora of over 20 million, which is willing to face and overcome the greatest of challenges in order to guarantee its European future.

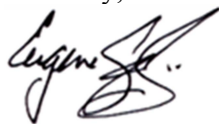
Ukraine is also a land with tremendous natural and technological resources that would considerably strengthen and enrich the EU, particularly after the negative impact of *Brexit*.

In fact, if *Brexit* was arguably the EU's greatest failure, then Ukraine's full membership in the EU will become the EU's greatest success story.

Indeed, Ukraine's membership in the EU will vividly change the entire playing field in Europe in the best interests of all EU member states.

We, therefore, urge you to seize this unique opportunity for the significant betterment of the EU, and demonstrate both courageous and inspired leadership by promoting Ukraine's accelerated accession to the EU.

Sincerely,



Eugene Czolij
NGO “Ukraine-2050” President
Ukrainian World Congress President (2008-2018)

cc: His Excellency Mr. Volodymyr Zelenskyy, President of Ukraine

Non-governmental organization (NGO) “Ukraine-2050” is a non-profit organization established to help implement, within one generation - by 2050, strategies for the sustainable development of Ukraine as a fully independent, territorially integral, democratic, reformed and economically competitive European state.