



**SEIMAS OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**STATEMENT
REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MINSK AGREEMENTS AND
STRENGTHED SUPPORT TO UKRAINE**

14 September 2016

Vilnius

The Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania,

regretting that the Minsk agreements, signed more than two years ago, on 5 September 2014 and on 11 February 2015, have not yet been implemented and peace in Ukraine has not been ensured; Ukraine and the border regions of the occupied territories still remain marked by tensions; there are permanent ceasefire violations, military and civilian casualties; there is still a lot of military equipment at the frontline of the conflict;

expressing concern about the provocations organised by the Russian Federation in its occupied Crimea in August 2016 and aimed at further increasing the tensions between Ukraine and the Russian Federation as parties to the conflict;

noting that, despite the challenging security situation, in order to strengthen its state on the path to the Euro-Atlantic community, Ukraine has already implemented and continues to carry out significant reforms in a number of areas, including but not limited to fight against corruption, justice, public administration, and consolidation of the rule of law;

considering that a policy of the European Union and NATO aimed at stronger integration with Ukraine will certainly act as a driving force of democratic change in the region and beyond, which will have an impact on Europe's long-term security;

underlines that it is necessary to reinforce the efforts of the international community, in particular of the countries in the Normandy format, to settle the conflict between Russia and Ukraine and mitigate its consequences, since, in the absence of the necessary progress in the Minsk process, the situation is turning into another frozen conflict in the Eastern neighbourhood of the European Union, which poses a threat to peace and safety of entire Europe and its people; **invites**, therefore, the parliamentarians and political leaders of the EU Member States and NATO member countries and the entire international community to continue the political debate in order to address the security crisis in Europe caused by the conflict between Russia and Ukraine and to prevent such situations from arising in future;

invites the Member States of the European Union and the entire international community to continue to uphold solidarity and maintain a unanimous position on the sanctions imposed on the Russian Federation for its actions undermining Ukraine's independence and territorial integrity as well as to state that the sanctions will be maintained until the Minsk agreements are implemented and Ukrainian territorial integrity is restored in accordance with the principles enshrined in its Constitution and international law;

notes that the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, including the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area, which provisional application started on 1 January 2016, is the most effective instrument in helping Ukraine to strengthen the political and economic stability and to increase its resilience to external threats; the Agreement opens up new opportunities for the people, defines reform guidelines for the future, and provides a new momentum for forging closer relations between the European Union and Ukraine; it is therefore important to ensure its effective implementation and to establish strong coordination structures for carrying out this task;

invites the Ukrainian authorities to engage in further concerted action aimed at resolution of the military conflict with Russia, restoration of Ukraine's territorial integrity, provision of safety to its people, and implementation of the reform agenda for Euro-Atlantic integration; **proposes** that Ukraine actively makes the most of the EU support and EU-funded projects such as Twinning and TAIEX as well as other technical assistance projects aimed at transferring best practice in the implementation of reforms in the countries of the European Union;

intends to actively continue implementing initiatives to strengthen the interparliamentary cooperation with the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine and providing support at bilateral and multilateral levels in the transfer of best practice in the fields of democratic reforms and consolidation of the rule of law;

encourages the Lithuanian authorities and the non-governmental sector to actively cooperate with the relevant bodies in Ukraine by transferring experience and offering expert assistance in the framework of the implementation of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement and other necessary reforms;

invites the EU institutions to agree as soon as possible on the introduction of a visa-free travel regime for the citizens of Ukraine, taking into account that Ukraine has already met all the requirements under the Visa Liberalisation Action Plan;

declares that it will not recognise the results of the elections to the State Duma of the Russian Federation of 18 September 2016 in the Russian-occupied Crimea; **calls on** the parliaments and governments of EU Member States and NATO member countries, EU institutions, international organisations, and the entire international community to adhere to this position and to refrain from sending election observers to the territories of Ukraine occupied and annexed by the Russian Federation; and **invites** the stakeholders to pursue an active policy of non-recognition of the occupation and annexation of Crimea;

recalling the resolution of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania of 12 April 2016 (No XII-2295) *on the Human Rights Situation, in Particular of the Crimean Tatars, in Crimea Occupied by the Russian Federation*, **strongly condemns** once again the systematic serious violations of human rights of the Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians in Crimea occupied by the Russian Federation; and **calls on** the European Union institutions, international organisations, their parliamentary assemblies, governments and parliaments, the entire international community, and its political leaders to pay due attention to human rights violations in Crimea and take action to influence the decisions of the Russian Federation on this matter.

Benediktas Juodka

Chair of the Committee