



**EUROPEAN COUNCIL
THE PRESIDENT**



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**Statement by President of the European Council
Herman Van Rompuy
at the occasion of the signing ceremony
of the political provisions of the Association Agreement
between the European Union and Ukraine**

In a few minutes we will together sign the political provisions of the Association Agreement between the European Union and Ukraine.

This gesture symbolises the importance that both sides attach to this relationship, and our joint will to take it further. It recognises the aspirations of the people of Ukraine to live in a country governed by values, by democracy and the rule of law, where all citizens have a stake in national prosperity. And the popular yearning for a decent life as a nation, for a European way of life.

Last November, the refusal to sign the Association Agreement with the European Union created a popular uprising, a political and cultural shift. We pay tribute to those who gave their life for freedom, and we support all those who today are striving to build an open and inclusive Ukraine.

Today, we are signing the Agreement's political provisions. It shows our steadfast support for the course the people of Ukraine have courageously pursued. Today is but the opening act: we expect to soon sign the Agreement's remaining parts, not least the economic provisions – together with the political ones they form a single instrument.

P R E S S

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The European Union also stands ready to help restore macro-economic stability in the country and to remove custom duties on Ukrainian exports to the EU for a while, so as to advance some of the full Agreement's trade benefits. It is a sign of our solidarity.

All this will help Ukraine on its path of economic and social reform. It is not an easy road, certainly not in this time of turmoil and tensions. But along this road the Association Agreement can serve as a compass. May it support and strengthen the political resolve of the leaders and citizens who want to build a democratic and inclusive Ukraine, protecting all groups and minorities, living in peace with its neighbours.

Prime-Minister, on behalf of the European Union, may your country's and its people's endeavours in facing these pressing, vital trials be met with success. The European Union is by this new Ukraine's side.
