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Joint statement of the NATO-Ukraine Commission at the level of Heads of State and Government

9 July 2016, Warsaw, Poland

We, the Heads of State and Government of the NATO-Ukraine Commission, met today in Warsaw, Poland, to review and further strengthen our co-operation in the framework of the Charter on a Distinctive Partnership. We discussed Ukraine's reform plans and progress in their implementation, endorsed the Comprehensive Assistance Package (CAP) for Ukraine and exchanged views on the security situation of Ukraine. Allies commended the efforts of the President of Ukraine aimed at a peaceful settlement of the conflict. We stand united in our support for Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders and its inherent right to decide its own future and foreign policy course free from outside interference, as set out in the Helsinki Final Act.

Despite repeated calls by the Alliance and the international community on Russia to abide by international law, Russia has continued its aggressive actions undermining Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity and security, in violation of international law. These developments have serious implications for the stability and security of the entire Euro-Atlantic area.

In accordance with the 1 April 2014 statement by NATO Foreign Ministers, Allies have been raising, in dialogue with Russia, the issue of Russia's actions in and around Ukraine.

Recalling the statement of the NATO-Ukraine Commission at the Wales Summit on 4 September 2014 and at the level of Foreign Ministers on 11 May 2015 in Antalya we call on Russia to reverse its illegal and illegitimate self-declared "annexation" of the Crimean peninsula, which we do not and will not recognize. We are especially concerned by the harassment and discrimination against the Crimean Tatars and other members of local communities. We

once again demand that the Russian de-facto authorities take the necessary measures to address the deteriorating human rights situation in Crimea and to ensure the safety, rights, and freedoms of everyone living on the peninsula. International monitoring structures must be allowed to carry out their essential work in view of the protection of human rights. We condemn Russia's ongoing and wide-ranging military build-up in Crimea, and are concerned by Russia's efforts and stated plans for further military build-up in the Black Sea region, which will potentially have further implications for the stability of the region.

Russia continues to foment a persistent state of instability in eastern Ukraine, which has led to the loss of nearly 10,000 lives in the Donbas and deprived Ukraine of a considerable part of its economic output. We are particularly concerned by the increase in ceasefire violations along the line of contact primarily by Russian-backed militants. This does not create an environment conducive to the peaceful settlement of the conflict. We recall that, according to the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements, an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine had to be implemented as of 15 February 2015.

We express our strong support for the full implementation of the Minsk Agreements and welcome the work carried out in the Normandy format and the Trilateral Contact Group aimed at the settlement of the conflict in eastern Ukraine by diplomatic means and dialogue. We urge all parties to fully comply with the commitments they signed up to, including adherence with the ceasefire and with a view to holding local elections in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions as soon as security conditions allow in accordance with the Minsk Agreements. We expect Russia to live up to its commitments and use its influence over the militants to ensure that they meet their commitments in full. We call on Russia to stop its political, military and financial support to the militants and to implement its commitments under the Minsk Package of Measures including the withdrawal of its forces and military equipment from the territory of Ukraine and to allow Ukraine to reinstate full control over its state border. We welcome the release of Nadiya Savchenko and call on the parties to ensure the release and exchange of all hostages and unlawfully detained persons.

We fully support the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) which has a key role in helping to deescalate the conflict and stress the importance of full and unhindered access by the OSCE monitors. Impediments to the SMM's work, which continue to occur overwhelmingly in areas under the control of the Russian-backed militants, represent a violation of the Minsk Agreements and seriously impede the monitoring function of the SMM. We remain confident that an inclusive political process aimed at reinstating law and constitutional order in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine is possible, provided that security is effectively and durably ensured and that local representatives are elected based on Ukrainian law, in accordance with relevant OSCE standards and monitored by OSCE/ODIHR, as stipulated in the Minsk Agreements.

The Ukrainian people have expressed their desire to see their country firmly anchored among European democracies. Ukraine remains committed to the implementation of wide-ranging reforms towards European and Euro-Atlantic standards, based on democratic values, respect for human rights, minorities and the rule of law, which will be essential in promoting prosperity and long-term stability, including combatting corruption and promoting an inclusive political process.

Allies commend and support Ukraine's progress in implementing comprehensive reforms despite difficult circumstances and look forward to further steps to develop its democratic institutions and to implement economic reforms. There have been achievements, in particular with regard to macroeconomic stabilization, police and defence reform, and public procurement. Important steps were also taken towards decentralization, the reform of the judiciary, the fight against corruption and in maintaining IMF conditionality. Noting these positive steps, challenges remain and Allies strongly encourage Ukraine to pursue swift and comprehensive implementation of these and other reforms still to be addressed and to ensure their sustainability.

NATO's level of engagement with Ukraine since 2014, both at the political level and in terms of practical work, has been unprecedented. NATO will continue to engage in a close political dialogue in the framework of the NATO-Ukraine Commission and support Ukraine in carrying out its ambitious reform agenda, including by making the best use of the Annual National Programme, the Planning and Review Process and the CAP. The CAP's aim is to consolidate and enhance NATO's assistance aimed at helping Ukraine to become more resilient, to better provide for its own security and to carry out needed reforms, including in the security and defence sector. We welcome the adoption of the Strategic Defence Bulletin which will serve as Ukraine's defence reform roadmap.

As set out in the CAP, we will continue to work together to advance and implement strategic reforms. The CAP contains more than 40 areas where NATO will support Ukraine in reforms conducted by the Ukrainian government. Allies will continue their support to Ukraine through the NATO Representation to Ukraine, as well as bilaterally providing advice and support particularly for Ukraine's defence and security structures, based on NATO standards and principles, including the civilian democratic control of the Armed Forces and to achieve interoperability with NATO.

Allies highly value Ukraine's significant contributions to Allied operations and the NATO Response Force and welcome the contribution made by the NATO-Ukraine partnership to providing security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area and beyond. Based on the decisions taken in Wales, we will examine the steps necessary to implement Ukraine's interest in the Enhanced Opportunities Programme within the Partnership Interoperability Initiative.

As noted at previous NATO Summits, including in Madrid, Bucharest, Lisbon, Chicago and Wales, an independent, sovereign and stable Ukraine, firmly committed to democracy and the rule of law, is key to Euro-Atlantic security. We reiterate our firm commitment to further develop the Distinctive Partnership between NATO and Ukraine which will contribute to building a stable, peaceful and undivided Europe.