

Udenrigsministerens indledende tale ved Ukraine-seminaret i Bruxelles den 28.5.

Timing: kl 17:10, taletid: 7 minutter, stående bag en pult med mikrofon

Esteemed Vice Prime Minister, ladies and gentlemen.

I am glad to be in Brussels this afternoon for this Ukraine seminar just weeks ahead of the Ukraine Reform Conference in Copenhagen. I would like to express my gratitude to Herman van Rompoy and the European Policy Center for hosting this event.

Over four years ago, the world witnessed how thousands of Ukrainians took to the streets and risked their lives in demanding a free and better country that looked towards the EU. And their struggle did not end with the Revolution of Dignity. Russia's aggressive behavior in Eastern Ukraine and illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 serves as a daily reminder for the Ukrainian people about the prize of choosing your own future.

During the last four years, Ukraine has been fighting a battle on two fronts: One against Russian aggression; and one against the corrupt structures of the Old Ukraine. The truth is that both efforts are linked: success in one will improve the chances of victory in the other.

Ukraine has done remarkable reform work over the past four years. And Ukraine has moved closer to the EU through the Association

Agreement and with the visa free regime. The Danish Government remains supportive of the European Aspirations of the Ukrainian people. We recognize that a resilient, secure and prosperous Ukraine is of strategic importance not only to Ukraine, but to Europe as a whole.

When we met last summer at the reform conference in London, the Ukrainian Government launched an ambitious Reform Action Plan for 2017-2020. In just a few weeks, we will meet again in Copenhagen to take stock. I will leave it to the Vice Prime Minister to elaborate on progress achieved, but I will commend the government for securing approval and rollout of extensive reforms within healthcare, pension and education. Each of these reforms could easily have led to the downfall of a government in any western country.

In Copenhagen, we will in particular focus on two issues: Good Governance and Economic Development and Growth. These are key areas in order to attract foreign investments, create prosperity and build a resilient society. Ukraine still has much reform work to do in this regard. It is important to note, that Ukraine is not reforming for *our* – the international community’s – sake. No, reforms are and must be for the sake of the Ukrainian people.

Good governance is also about fighting corruption. And while corruption is still an essential challenge for the Ukrainian society, we

should also note that reforms already implemented are helping to close the loopholes for corruption. They have a direct and positive effect on the state finances and the Ukrainian economy. For instance, reforms within the energy sector brought from Naftogaz alone in 2017 a net profit of 1,3 billion EURO. And the Prozorro procurement system has since its launch in 2016 saved the budget funds over 780 billion EUROS.

There is still a lot of work to be done in fighting corruption. The missing link in the anti-corruption chain is an independent High Anti-Corruption Court that would allow corrupt officials to be placed on trial and face justice. The establishment of such a court would demonstrate seriousness of purpose and build public support for further steps.

It may seem as though the EU and the international community is tired of talking about Ukraine and reforms in Ukraine. If that is the case, then it must be because we are losing sight of why these reforms matter. What progress and resilience they have in fact already brought. And not least why this is perhaps not such an easy battle. I hope that we can explore this together today and in Copenhagen on 27 June. Thank you for coming.