

Bratislava, 28 April 2014

CONCLUSIONS

of the Meeting of the European Affairs Committees of the V4 Parliaments

Bratislava, 27-29 April 2014

Representatives of the European Affairs Committees of the V4 Parliaments:

With regard to the European elections 2014, Year of the institutional renewal

- support all activities aimed at the stronger involvement of the citizens of the European Union in the debate on the EU and its future in the context of the forthcoming elections to the EP;
- fully support activities of all relevant participants whose aim is to provide the highest participation of the EU citizens in the elections to the EP in May 2014;
- highlight the role of national Parliaments – with a special focus on the Committees on European Affairs- regarding the regular debate of EU policies and the future of the EU;
- encourage all activities that will increase democratic legitimacy of the decision making process in the EU and which will bring the EU closer to its citizens, while in the area of representative democracy emphasize the strengthening of the role of the parliaments as directly elected bodies, and in the sphere of participatory democracy welcome the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) and other instruments for higher direct participation of the European citizens in public policies.

On Ukraine

- condemn Russia's military intervention in Crimea and the illegal annexation of a part of Ukrainian territory. Those acts are inconsistent with Russia's existing commitments and obligations including the UN Charter, the OSCE Helsinki Final Act and the Budapest Memorandum;
- consider the so-called referendum held on 16 March 2014 in the Crimean Autonomous Republic on its legal status unconstitutional and therefore its results can only be regarded as unlawful and void.;
- strongly support sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all countries of the Eastern Partnership. Believe that there is no place for any separatist activities and provocations aiming at changing borders in Europe of the 21st century;
- welcome the Geneva Statement of April 17, 2014 in which the participants agreed on initial steps to de-escalate the tensions and to restore security for all citizens of Ukraine.

The statements serve as a good basis for the dialogue that will result in finding a solution to the political crisis in Ukraine;

- strongly encourage all sides involved to refrain from violence, intimidation or provocative actions and start negotiations immediately, reflecting the results of the Geneva Meeting;
- call on Russia to fulfil its obligations of Geneva and to contribute to de-escalation of tensions in eastern part of Ukraine;
- call on the Ukrainian authorities, political parties and the civil society as a whole to engage in a genuine dialogue within the country aiming at building an inclusive society where the interests and traditions of all the regions and whole population would be protected, including in the sphere of human rights and rights of persons belonging to national minorities;
- emphasize importance of presidential elections for the strengthening of Ukrainian democracy and political stabilization;
- support Ukraine's on-going efforts to strengthen its political and economic association with the EU and support the need to provide Ukraine with a clear prospect of EU membership;
- invite the Hellenic Parliament to include the point on Ukraine into the LI COSAC agenda as it was already suggested during the meeting of the Chairpersons of the COSAC in January 2014.

With regard to social entrepreneurship and social economy, the tools for growth support

- welcome all initiatives of the European Union institutions, in particular of the European Commission, the European Parliament and the European Economic and Social Committee, supporting and promoting social entrepreneurship and social economy which includes both SMEs and large enterprises, cooperatives, mutual societies, associations, foundations, social NGOs etc.;
- point out that social entrepreneurship and social economy are the key elements of the European social model and directly contribute to social and economic cohesion, to a fairer income and wealth distribution, provide innovative employment opportunities and services to millions of individuals including marginalised and disadvantaged persons. Particularly in the current period of economic and social crises social enterprises are able to bring innovative solutions for social cohesion and inclusion, job creation and growth;
- take the view that the cooperative model of governance which is based on joint ownership and democratic control by their member-stakeholders constitutes an important contribution to economic growth, solidarity and social cohesion;
- call on the European Commission to pay proper attention to the social economy in all EU policies designed to contribute to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, as well as in the relevant initiatives of the EU 2020 strategy.

With regard to the Tolerant Europe (fight against extremism, human rights protection)

- condemn all forms and expressions of racism, violence, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and all other forms of hatred, intolerance and discrimination which lead to suppression of basic human rights and liberties of the EU citizens remembering the victims of genocide stemming from racial violence during World War II as well as all attempts to revive authoritarian or totalitarian ideologies while respecting profound anti-fascist traditions of our nations;
- support activities leading to broader social, national, ethnic, racial and gender inclusion and cohesion of the EU societies including the integration into the society of all groups of citizens affected by marginalization or exclusion;
- notice with concern that Europe is currently facing increasing nationalism, extremism, xenophobia and ethnic intolerance and that extremist movements are growing stronger especially due to economic, financial and social crises in the EU;
- emphasize the need to strengthen the coordination of national policies aiming at fighting right-wing extremism in the territory of the EU Member States.