



**JOINT STATEMENT ON UKRAINE**

**OF THE PARLIAMENTARY SPEAKERS OF THE VISEGRAD COUNTRIES**

**Budapest, 28 February 2014**

The Parliamentary Speakers of the Visegrad Countries have discussed the recent developments in Ukraine.

The Parliamentary Speakers welcome the election of the new Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada and the creation of the new inclusive government as important steps towards consolidation of State and necessary reforms.

The Parliamentary Speakers of the Visegrad Countries express their sympathy to the families of all the people killed in the conflict. Those who committed crimes against innocent civilians must be held legally responsible.

The Speakers perceive the recent upheaval of Ukrainian society as a clear sign, that European values are in the core of the Ukrainian nationhood.

The Speakers underline their strong interest in and support for maintaining the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine and expect all stakeholders to refrain from any action that could hinder this. All Ukrainian political forces in the Verkhovna Rada, as well as at national, regional and local level must continue to engage responsibly in a substantive dialogue to restore law and order on the entire territory of the country. A sustainable and inclusive consolidation process must also include preparation for free and fair elections, as well as the respect of European democratic values, including the rights of the national, ethnic and linguistic minorities, as included in the relevant documents of the Council of Europe.

With particular concern we follow the news coming from Crimea. It is essential, that right now, when the process of political stabilisation in Kiev is in full motion, other Ukrainian regions should support democratic changes in the country.

The Speakers underline their support for the reform process and modernization of the country and for strengthening its relations with the European Union. They look forward to signing the Association Agreement with the EU, including the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement. They express their conviction that this Association Agreement does not constitute the final goal in the EU-Ukraine cooperation.

They underscore the importance of people-to-people contacts and see possibilities for a greater use of the International Visegrad Fund for this purpose, and also support the speeding up of the visa-liberalization process and the increase in the number of scholarships available for Ukrainians in the Erasmus program. They see civil society as a fundamental element of well-functioning and fully-fledged democracy.

The Speakers are looking forward to continuing the cooperation between their respective Parliaments and the Verkhovna Rada. The Speakers agree that with their special tools and possibilities they will make all efforts to foster Ukrainian democracy.

The Speakers request the Speaker of the Hungarian National Assembly to forward the Joint Statement to the Speaker of the Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada.

This document has been drafted in English in 6 original copies.

Budapest, 28 February 2014

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