

Remarks by President Donald Tusk after his meeting with President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy

It is my pleasure to welcome you, Mr President, dear friend, in Brussels. The fact that you're visiting the capital of the European Union and the headquarters of NATO on your first foreign trip is a strong and important signal.

Just after the election in Ukraine, I had the opportunity to congratulate you on your victory. As I said then, and repeated today, free and fair elections are the best proof of what Ukraine has already achieved. This is even more remarkable taking into account the difficult security, political and economic circumstances, including the continuing threats to Ukraine's territorial integrity.

In our meeting today, I re-stated the EU's support to Ukraine and its people, who have made great progress in reforming their country since the Revolution of Dignity five years ago.

The EU will always be determined to help Ukraine strengthen its democracy and the rule of law, fight corruption, stabilise its economy and pursue energy sector reforms. Because a strong and democratic Ukraine is in the best interest of the European Union.

We are ready to continue our work on the implementation of the EU-Ukraine Association. This has already brought many positive results in trade and investments, which benefit our people, on both sides. And it can bring many more in the future. The EU will also maintain its financial support for economic stabilisation, despite Russian aggression and the war in Donbas.

We also discussed the ongoing threats to the security of Ukraine. The EU will stay its course and remain committed to Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. We condemn the Russian decrees on granting Russian citizenship to Ukrainians in Donbas or of Crimean origin. This goes against the Minsk agreements.

And we continue to call for the immediate release of Ukrainian citizens illegally detained in Russia and Crimea, including the 24 Ukrainian sailors held in Moscow since November.

President Zelenskyy and I discussed our next EU-Ukraine summit. This will set the priorities for our relations in the year ahead. Our joint decision is to hold the summit, as planned, and we have also agreed to remain in close contact with the President.

Let me conclude by repeating what I said in the Rada in February: "There can be no just Europe without an independent Ukraine. There can be no safe Europe

without a safe Ukraine. To put it simply: there can be no Europe without Ukraine!" Mr President, Ukraine can count on the European Union, as always. We are and will remain your best friend and trusted ally. Thank you.