



**Statement by the UNIC Co-chairs Ivanna Klympush-Tsyntsadze, Head of the Ukrainian delegation to the NATO PA, and Senator Raynell Andreychuk, Canada**

Brussels, 23 November 2015 - The Ukraine-NATO Interparliamentary Council (UNIC), the parliamentary counterpart to the NATO-Ukraine Commission, has come together at a time when the international community has been compelled to refocus its attention on the serious challenge that Daesh and other terrorist groups pose to our societies. Ten days after the horrendous attacks in Paris and at a time when Brussels was on highest threat alert, we have expressed our deepest sympathy and unswerving solidarity with France and all nations that have been the victims of terrorism.

We must stand united as an international community in combatting terrorism, and be resolute in our action. At the same time, we must recognize the multiplicity and diversity of the challenges our societies face. In today's complex security environment, there is no single, simple solution. Each challenge requires a tailored response.

Ukraine continues to face aggression and destabilization from Russia in violation of international law, and this meeting of UNIC has provided another opportunity to underline the NATO Parliamentary Assembly's solidarity with Ukraine. UNIC members reaffirm their commitment to Ukraine's full sovereignty and territorial integrity, and condemn Russia's ongoing aggression and failure to implement its commitments under the Minsk agreements. Pressure must be maintained until Russia convincingly demonstrates compliance with all aspects of the agreement. The NATO PA most recently reaffirmed this position in the resolution on Solidarity with Ukraine which it adopted at its annual session in Stavanger last month.

The Ukrainian delegation stated its determination to keep momentum towards implementation of Ukraine's commitments under the Minsk agreements. Maintaining political consensus and public support on such difficult measures as the approval of Constitutional changes will be difficult however in the absence of reciprocity from the Russian side.

UNIC further affirmed its conviction that the in-depth reforms that Ukraine has engaged will help it better confront the threat it faces from Russia and Russian-backed separatist, as well as – and as importantly – addressing the Ukrainian population's expectations regarding democracy, rule of law, corruption-free governance, economic opportunities and social benefits. Reforms will make Ukraine stronger, not weaker. The Annual National Programme of cooperation with NATO provides a particularly valuable tool to support the reform process in Ukraine.

UNIC reviewed progress in implementing the reform agenda in the defence sector, as well as the broader government. The Council acknowledged the great challenge of implementing needed reforms in so many sectors at a time of ongoing conflict, but encouraged Ukrainian authorities to demonstrate visible, incremental progress. Members of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine confirmed their determination to use their role of democratic oversight to address remaining obstacles to reform. Today's meeting helped them identify areas for improvement.

The Council, composed of representatives from each of the Assembly's committees and leading members of the Verkhovna Rada, will continue to support and assist the Parliament of Ukraine in every way it can in order to attain concrete achievements. Engagement with, and support for, Ukraine should reflect the scale of the challenges associated with the country's in-depth transformation.

The intensity and quality of the NATO PA's relations with Ukraine is truly remarkable. UNIC is the most visible expression of this cooperation; it provides a critical forum for dialogue, and for reviewing all aspects of the NATO-Ukraine relationship.

The Council will next meet in Kyiv in June 2016.