

**Ukraine-NATO Interparliamentary Council (UNIC)
Monday, 8 June, Kyiv, Ukraine**

**Statement by the UNIC Co-chairs
Andriy Parubiy, First Deputy Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada,
and Senator Raynell Andreychuk, Canada**

The NATO Parliamentary Assembly has maintained a close partnership with the Verkhovna Rada since Ukraine established its independence, and has long supported Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity. During the events of Euro-Maidan, the Assembly appealed to Ukrainian authorities to end the assault on protestors and to embark upon genuine negotiations with opposition leaders. The Assembly also firmly condemned Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and its ongoing campaign of aggression in Eastern Ukraine. In November 2014, the Assembly stated, *inter alia*, that "Russia's direct as well as covert involvement, including the deployment of unmarked uniformed troops in part of Ukraine, is the principal reason for the prolonged armed conflict and the humanitarian crisis in eastern Ukraine".

To demonstrate its support, the Assembly has held a succession of high-level meetings in Ukraine, and has repeatedly called upon the international community to assist Ukraine in dealing with the many challenges it faces.

This meeting of the Ukraine-NATO Inter-parliamentary Council (UNIC), the parliamentary counterpart to the NATO-Ukraine Commission, has provided another opportunity to underline the Assembly's solidarity with Ukraine and its support for Ukraine's reform process.

The Council, composed of representatives from each of the Assembly's committees and leading members of the Verkhovna Rada, is a critical forum for dialogue between the Assembly and Ukrainian Parliament and for examining the implementation of the NATO-Ukraine Charter and reviewing all aspects of the NATO-Ukraine relationship.

Following today's programme of briefings and discussions, we warmly welcome the changing perception of NATO within Ukrainian society as well as growing public support for Euro-Atlantic integration. We are convinced that the Assembly will be ready to assist Ukraine in deepening its relationship with NATO should its government choose to follow this course, and we welcome the Assembly's long-standing and enduring commitment to NATO's Open Door policy.

We strongly encourage Ukraine to implement fully the Annual National Programme of cooperation with NATO, not only as means of deepening ties with NATO, but also because the programme will bolster Ukraine's security and contribute substantially to Ukraine's progress towards Euro-Atlantic integration. We also particularly endorse measures designed to enhance greater understanding among the Ukrainian people of the role and goals of the Alliance.

We are firmly convinced that the Euro-Atlantic community should provide substantial assistance to Ukraine to enable it to implement military, political and economic reforms and thereby respond more effectively to external aggression. We particularly underscore the need for the Euro-Atlantic community and Ukraine to reinforce their co-operation to tackle Moscow's campaign of propaganda and misinformation, designed to weaken Ukrainian statehood and to mislead and divide the democratic world.

We also underline the need for diplomatic efforts to resolve the dispute with Russia, recognizing that these efforts should not compromise Ukrainian sovereignty nor Ukraine's inalienable right to determine its own place in the European order. In this context, we condemn the recent escalation of violence by the Russia-backed separatists in the Mari'inka area, which, together with the attack on Debaltsevo, represents the most blatant breach of the Minsk-2 agreement so far. International sanctions should therefore be maintained, and potentially expanded, until Russia convincingly demonstrates that it is willing to abide by international law. This would include Russia's acknowledgement that both Crimea and the Eastern regions of Ukraine currently occupied by

Russian supported separatists, are indeed Ukrainian sovereign territory. The discrimination and persecution of political opponents and representatives of certain ethnic groups, particularly the Crimean Tatars, in the occupied territories should cease immediately.

We also urge democratically elected Ukrainian authorities to establish the highest standards possible in matters of economic and judicial governance, and, in particular, to tackle resolutely the problem of corruption.

We accordingly look forward to re-energizing the work of this Council with the aim of deepening parliamentary collaboration between NATO countries and Ukraine.