

UKRAINE REFORM CONFERENCE, 06 JULY 2017

**COUNCIL OF EUROPE - STATEMENT SPECIAL ADVISER OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE FOR UKRAINE, RÉGIS BRILLAT**



Ministers,
Your Excellencies,
Esteemed Partners,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am honoured to address you on behalf of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, on the occasion of the Ukrainian Reform Conference.

Fostering respect for human rights and the rule of law is a permanent and long-term process. Although it is primarily the responsibility of national authorities to “bring human rights home”, the Council of Europe supports its member states in doing so through its standard-setting, monitoring and cooperation work.

Following the internal political changes in Ukraine since the beginning of 2014, the Council of Europe has assisted Ukraine, as a fully-fledged member state of our Organisation to overcome difficult time and to achieve tangible results in its reform process.

The Council of Europe is collaborating with Ukraine on the basis of an Action Plan which has the role of the Strategic Roadmap. Key priorities of the Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine include the constitutional and justice reforms, the implementation of the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights, the fight against corruption, decentralisation, enhancing of the capacity of the public administration at central and local levels, respect of all human rights including freedom of expression, the media and journalists, as well as social rights and the protection of vulnerable groups including IDPs, the fight against violence against women. On 12 June, this agenda for our cooperation was confirmed for the period 2018-2021.

Several major strategic policy developments, indicating that Ukraine is on the right way, relate to the adoption of the Strategy of Reforms 2020, Justice Sector Reform Strategy and Action Plan, Anti-Corruption and Human Rights Strategies and constitutional reform process.

I am proud to emphasise the role played by the Council of Europe in all of these positive developments. We have been working intensively with the authorities through the provision of expert advice and recommendations with a view to developing and adopting the appropriate legal framework. Amendments to the Constitution of Ukraine related to the judiciary, the adoption of the Law “On the Judiciary and Status of Judges”, the establishment of the free legal aid system, the selection process for the new Supreme Court judges settled in March 2017, a new set of anti-corruption institutions and adopted new legislation on anti-corruption, the adoption of the new Law on the Public Prosecution Service, strengthening freedom of the Media and establishing a Public Broadcasting System in Ukraine are major achievement of our joint collaboration with the Ukrainian authorities for a short period of time. The aforesaid constitutional amendments along with the

mentioned strategic documents are considered as a good basis for building an accessible, independent, efficient, transparent and accountable justice system in the country that will guarantee the respect for human rights in Ukraine.

A good legal framework is indeed an important step forward. However, the real success of the reforms depends on the effectiveness of their implementation, which remains a major challenge for Ukraine.

It is crucial that the Ukrainian authorities continue to demonstrate their firm political will and take effective practical measures in terms of the pace and coherence of the reforms' implementation. The transparency of the reform process and the active involvement of civil society are vital for fostering the democratic processes. A precondition for achieving the ultimate goal is that all stakeholders at all levels are committed to fully and genuinely undertake the required work.

I take this opportunity to confirm the Council of Europe's commitment to support Ukraine in these complex efforts. Our gathering today will build upon the results already achieved and contribute to their sustainability, and, in its turn, is a clear proof of this commitment.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To conclude, let me express my gratitude to all the Ukrainian national stakeholders, non-governmental and international counterparts for their cooperation, synergies and firm commitment to our continuous joint initiatives aimed at improving the human rights situation and strengthening the rule of law in Ukraine.

Last but not least, we are ready to continue our partnership with our international allies aiming at solid and effective implementation of the reforms, with a view to improving the daily life of the Ukrainian population and ensure full respect of the Council of Europe's three pillars: democracy, rule of law and human rights.

Thank you!