

UKRAINE REFORM CONFERENCE, 06 JULY 2017

SWITZERLAND - STATEMENT BY STATE SECRETARY AND HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT FOR COOPERATION WITH EASTERN EUROPE, MS ELISABETH VON CAPELLER



**“Reaffirming Switzerland’s commitment to support the Ukrainian people in building together the peaceful and prosperous future they aspire to.”**

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning.

First and foremost I would like to thank the government of Ukraine for convening today’s conference “Opportunity Ukraine”. I would also like to express my gratitude to the UK government for its hospitality and for convening this gathering.

Today’s conference offers a chance to have a frank dialogue about where Ukraine stands, what Ukraine’s plans are and where the assistance from the international community is most needed and effective. It is also an opportunity to discuss where further progress is necessary in order to ensure the continuation of Ukraine’s promising and laudable reform process.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me first take this opportunity to reaffirm that Switzerland will remain unwavering in its support for Ukraine and the Ukrainian people in their desire to return to peace. Switzerland will continue to show solidarity with the Ukrainian people and to advocate for a peaceful resolution of the conflict by promoting dialogue, human rights and respect for international humanitarian law.

I wish to emphasize the following three priorities of our engagement:

**First** of all, we will continue our efforts to help improve the situation and alleviate the suffering of the people most affected by the conflict.

Apart from providing humanitarian relief, Switzerland will also pursue its long-term assistance to eastern Ukraine. Switzerland embraces the shift from short term actions to recovery operations, aiming at supporting those affected by the conflict including IDPs and their host communities.

**Secondly**, we strongly believe that we all share the common responsibility to constantly work towards peace. That’s why Switzerland continues to be actively involved in the work of the OSCE under the Austrian Chairmanship. Support for the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, which was funded under the Swiss Chairmanship of the OSCE back in 2014, remains of great importance for Switzerland.

**Thirdly**, the priorities in Switzerland’s Cooperation Strategy respond to the major needs for reform in Ukraine. Our efforts will continue to support the decentralization and local governance reform as well as inclusive sustainable economic development. Furthermore we’ll remain active in supporting the healthcare reform.

I would like to take this opportunity to highly rate the efforts of the Ukrainian authorities to implement large-scale reforms in such difficult conditions. Since the International Support for Ukraine' conference in Kyiv, significant progress in a number of areas has been made. This conference is also about recognizing these remarkable achievements. Switzerland encourages the Ukrainian government to pursue, implement and sustain the progress already made in the reform process. In our view it is crucial that the Ukrainian population and international community see even more progress. Of particular importance are tangible results in the justice reform and the fight against corruption.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Transition is a powerful engine of change. But it may also become a source of frustration if people's aspirations are not answered.

Let me reiterate in conclusion that Switzerland remains firmly committed to supporting Ukraine in continuing its impressive political, economic and social reforms since the Maidan.

Thank you for your attention.