

ADDRESS TO THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL

Your Excellencies, Dear Members of the European Council,

It is our great honor and privilege to take this opportunity to address you on the extraordinary matter of Ukraine's application for accession to the European Union.

We represent a coalition of Ukrainian independent non-governmental think tanks and organizations focused on the issues of energy, environment and climate. Our activity is supported and trusted by a number of international donors, including the European Commission, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the International Renaissance Foundation, and many more.

Since 2011, when Ukraine joined the Treaty establishing the Energy Community, our organizations regularly monitored Ukraine's implementation of the corresponding commitments. We continued the meticulous analysis of policies and practices after the conclusion of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, looking deeply into **the reforms of energy, climate and environment**. Not only we held the monitoring, but we also advocated together with other key stakeholders for proper adoption and implementation of the reforms necessary to meet the conditions for EU accession. We provided recommendations, initiated policy discussions, and did our best to ensure the relevant *acquis* are transposed and duly implemented.

Following a decade of these efforts, we need to conclude Ukraine has made **a significant progress to achieve compliance** and thus deserves its EU membership application to be considered as fast as possible.

As these achievements, along with common European values of human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law, and human rights being defended in the war against Russia, we urge you to make a historical step of **granting Ukraine the status of candidate country and opening the accession negotiations**.

We strongly believe that such a decision would demonstrate the true leadership of the European Union and **provide the necessary momentum for Ukraine to move forward** and achieve full compliance with accession criteria. Enhancing the speed and quality of the much-needed reforms in Ukraine would bring benefits for the whole European community. This would ensure that the cost of post-war reconstruction would be **a solid investment in the green and sustainable future**, as Ukraine already has much to offer for enhancing common energy security and reaching decarbonization goals in line with the European Green Deal.

The decision to grant candidate status to Ukraine will also send **a strong signal** not only to those who were pushing hard in favor of the reforms in the fields of energy, environment, and climate, but also to those who denied the possibility of such reforms being effective. Such a signal will further support Ukrainian society in its European choice, and provide necessary instruments to properly implement and control the reforms. This would also be an extremely important signal for all the other countries having aspirations to join the EU, including

candidate countries of the Western Balkan region, since Ukraine has been sharing similar international frameworks and obligations with these countries and coordinating the reform process in many spheres of EU integration with them for the last decades.

Any other form of acknowledgement of the European aspirations and the European choice of Ukraine will not bring us any step closer to ending the war on the European continent. We have witnessed several times the attempts to suggest Ukraine to become part of the “European political community” or other substitutes to the potential EU membership. Yet, **only a clear perspective** for a swift accession of Ukraine can be the respective and sizable step in the face of the current challenges.

“Ukraine belongs to our European family”, as stated by the EU leaders in the Versailles Declaration of March 10-11, 2022. It is high time to embrace Ukraine in this family as a future fully-fledged member.

Signed:

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