



**EUROPEAN COUNCIL
THE PRESIDENT**



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Opening remarks by President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy at the 16th EU-Ukraine Summit

It is a pleasure to welcome you to Brussels for the 16th EU-Ukraine Summit – the third during your tenure as President and your second Summit in Brussels.

The timing of this Summit is good: Four months ago you held Parliamentary elections and the new Ukrainian Government has taken office with challenging tasks ahead of it. On the EU side we have formulated our position, based on internal consensus, on the way ahead in the EU's relations with Ukraine.

Let me state from the outset that the EU's position is based on the continued strong commitment to its policy of engagement with Ukraine aimed at achieving political association and economic integration. We acknowledge Ukraine's European aspirations and we welcome your European choice. As you know, such a choice and the special relation it entails implies a commitment to shared values: human rights, democracy, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law must be upheld.

This Summit takes place indeed at an historical moment in our relations. There is a concrete blueprint for their development in front of us – the Association Agreement with its Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area – as well as concrete criteria and a concrete time perspective for its possible signing.

Let us therefore work to ensure that 2013 becomes a determining year in EU-Ukraine relations. Commitments undertaken and their effective implementation would also contribute to a successful Eastern Partnership Summit end November, during which I hope that we can realise tangible results for your country. Mr President this is a unique window of opportunity we must seize.

P R E S S

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