



EUROPEAN UNION

~FACTSHEET~

EU-UKRAINE ACTION PLAN

The issue

With the enlargement of the European Union (EU) on 1 May 2004, Ukraine became a direct EU neighbour. In 2002, the Copenhagen European Council recognised that enlargement presented an important opportunity to develop an increasingly close relationship with Ukraine based on shared values and to foster stability and prosperity within and beyond the Union's new borders while presenting a challenge to avoid new dividing lines in Europe. In May 2004, the Commission presented the European Neighbourhood Policy – Strategy Paper. The EU-Ukraine Action Plan (AP) is the tool to achieve the above objectives within three years time. As a result of OSCE/ODIHR considering Ukraine's December 26 Presidential elections as bringing Ukraine "substantially closer to meeting OSCE election commitments and Council of Europe and other European standards," the EU responded with a new approach to further enhancing relations within the framework of this Action Plan (see below.)

The EU strategy

The European Neighbourhood Action Plan has been jointly drafted to ensure that the EU and Ukraine develop an increasingly close relationship, going beyond co-operation, to gradual economic integration and a deepening of political cooperation. The AP will help fulfil the provisions of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement through a set of clear priorities, objectives and specific actions that, if achieved by both the EU and Ukraine, will ensure that the relationship progresses based on commitments to common values.

The Action Plan description

The Plan maps out areas where further work is needed to support Ukraine's political and economic transition, to tackle problems and challenges of common interest, to strengthen links and intensify the relations between Ukraine, Ukrainians and the European Union. The AP has six main chapters: *Political dialogue and reform; Economic and social reform and development; Trade, market and regulatory reform; Co-operation in Justice and Home Affairs; Transport, energy information society and environment and People-to-people contacts.*

A separate detailed Justice and Home Affairs action plan already exists for this area, which is integrated by reference into the overall Action Plan. Questions related to migration and visas are highlighted as a priority in the plan.

The Action Plan will be supported by a range of measures, such as reinforced EU assistance and the opening of certain European Community programmes to Ukrainian participation.

In their 24 January letter, Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner and High Representative Javier Solana set out a ten-point plan to demonstrate support for further enhancing EU-Ukraine relations within the framework of the ENP as a result of the December elections. This Plan includes, among other things, opening up Ukraine's access to up to €250 million in EIB financing, the EU's intent to launch negotiations regarding visa facilitation, enhanced cooperation in several key sectors (e.g. energy, transport and environment), further acceleration of the process towards granting Ukraine "Market Economy Status," and the relaunch of the review of the feasibility study on establishing a Free Trade Area between Ukraine and the EU.

The link to the US

The U.S. provides assistance to Ukraine through the Department of State, USAID, Department of Energy, and the Department of Labour that can facilitate Ukraine's progress towards further European integration. Progress towards completion of the AP objectives may, in turn, make Ukraine eligible for the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA). MCA projects would likely further fuel momentum towards completion of AP priorities.

Facts and figures

- The Action Plan has three-year duration.
- The Action Plan is expected to be formally adopted by both the EU and Ukraine during the 21 February 2005 Cooperation Council.
- Joint bodies established under the PCA will advance and monitor the implementation of the Action Plan.
- A first review of AP implementation could be considered in the beginning of 2006 if Ukraine demonstrates significant progress in implementation.
- The AP can be regularly amended and/or updated to reflect progress in addressing the priorities.

For more information go to:

EU-Ukraine relations website: http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/ukraine/intro/index.htm

Neighbourhood policy website: http://europa.eu.int/comm/world/enp/index_en.htm

February 2005