

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Prime Minister: Latvia and the whole of Europe will continue to support Ukraine in its reform process**

Kiev, 28 April 2015. Addressing the participants of the "International Support for Ukraine Conference" in Kiev today, the Prime Minister of Latvia Laimdota Straujuma pointed out that Ukraine faces immense challenges – resolving conflict in the eastern part of the country, country's territorial integrity and economic growth.

"But you do not face these challenges alone. Latvia and Europe stand with you. And it is clear – Crimea is and will be part of Ukraine," said Laimdota Straujuma. The Prime Minister emphasized that Latvia as a presiding country of the Council of the European Union has put the Eastern Partnership at the heart of its agenda in developing open Europe that takes care of neighbourhood and strives for stability and prosperity.

According to L. Straujuma, the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, effective since the last year, and the Deep and Comprehensive Trade Agreement to take effect on January 1, 2016, can be powerful tools to facilitate economic recovery. "However, this has to be Ukraine's process; it has to be led by Ukraine and the people of Ukraine. The Ukrainian institutions, politicians and citizens have to drive reforms that will determine a positive future for Ukraine, by improving public administration, by decentralizing decision making, as well as by increasing confidence in business climate," said the Prime Minister.

Latvia has also gone through a difficult reform process, therefore understands Ukraine very well, noted L. Straujuma. "My country has experienced significant and painful reforms over the last two decades. We have adopted the euro and our economy is growing".

In her address, the Prime Minister applauded Ukraine's leadership for the progress made in implementing the recommendations of the International Monetary Fund, in tackling corruption related problems and improving the business climate through deregulation, and in steps towards the local government reform. "Every concrete decision drives Ukraine towards a more stable and prosperous country. It benefits the Ukrainian people and the whole of Europe," said L. Straujuma.

Latvia has sought to contribute both through the EU and bilaterally with humanitarian assistance to victims of the conflict, financing and expertise to the OECD mission and the EU Advisory Mission. Technical assistance too, has been provided to regional development and support for small and medium-sized businesses, assistance in agriculture that is an important part of Ukraine's economy and exports, in anti-corruption - through internationally-recognized Latvian experts, in education and raising public awareness about EU integration.

**Photos available here:** <https://www.flickr.com/photos/valstskanceleja/sets/72157652219148342/>

**Address by Prime Minister:** <http://www.mk.gov.lv/sites/default/files/editor/ukraina-davosa.pdf>

**More about the event:** <http://supportforukraine.com>

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