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2416th Council meeting

- GENERAL AFFAIRS -

Brussels, 11 March 2002

President	Mr Josep PIQUE I CAMPS
:	Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Spain

Ukraine - Co-operation Council on 11 March 2002

The Council endorsed the Union's position for the fifth Co-operation Council meeting with Ukraine, which will take place in Brussels on Monday 11 March 2002 (see *Press Release - doc. 7026/02*).

Brussels, 11 March 2002

7026/02 (Presse 64)

FIFTH MEETING OF THE COOPERATION COUNCIL
BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND UKRAINE

Brussels, 11 March 2002

The Cooperation Council between the European Union and Ukraine held its fifth meeting on Monday 11 March 2002. The meeting was chaired by Mr Josep PIQUÉ I CAMPS, Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs and President in office of the Council of the EU. Deputy Prime Minister Vasyl ROHOVYI

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headed the Ukrainian Delegation¹. Deputy Director General ~~Mr~~-Catherine DAY represented the European Commission.

The fifth meeting of the Cooperation Council took place only three weeks before the parliamentary elections in Ukraine. Referring to the discussions at the Summit in Yalta in September 2001, the Cooperation Council recalled that free and fair elections, reform of the judiciary and transparent state-media relations are key parameters in ensuring the development of a modern and democratic Ukraine.

The EU underlined its interest to have strong links with its future direct neighbours and therefore appreciated Ukraine's initiatives to launch discussions on further strengthening relations. The Cooperation Council recognized, however, that Ukraine's desire for a closer relationship with the EU cannot be pursued separately from the task of the new government to continue political and economic reforms based on market economy and European norms and values. The PCA is a privileged instrument to help achieve these goals.

The Cooperation Council reviewed the progress made during the past year in the six priority areas for cooperation in the framework of the PCA (i.e. energy, trade, justice and home affairs, approximation of legislation, environmental protection and transport) and agreed that regional and cross-border cooperation should be added on the list. The Cooperation Council agreed on the following objectives of cooperation in these areas:

Reform of the *energy sector* should continue, including privatisation in the power generation -and distribution sector and reform in the coal sector. The Parties will continue cooperation on renewable energy and energy efficiency; energy transportation infrastructure, especially transit of gas; nuclear safety and related issues, including follow-up of the closure of Chornobyl and EU and G7 assistance in this sector.

Regarding *trade and investment*, it was agreed that efforts should concentrate on means to accelerate the negotiating process for Ukraine's accession to WTO, including the introduction and implementation of international standards and technical regulations, and improved protection of intellectual property rights, as foreseen in the PCA and the WTO rules. With this in mind and in order to contribute to the overall investment climate, the Parties shall continue their efforts to resolve outstanding bilateral trade and investment issues.

The implementation of the recently adopted *Action Plan* provides the basis for intensified

¹ Mr Chalyi, State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Mr Shlapak, Minister for Economy and European Integration; Ms Stanik, Minister of Justice; Mr Haiduk, Minister of Energy; and Mr Kyrykin, Minister of Environment also participated.

Cooperation *in the field of justice and home affairs*. This comprehensive plan covers a wide range of key issues in EU-Ukraine relations. The negotiations of a re-admission agreement; strengthening the management of borders, including development of border infrastructure; immigration questions; judicial reform, the rule of law, combating organised crime in all its forms as well as terrorism were identified as first priorities. Issues related to EU enlargement, including visa issues, will also be discussed in this context.

Approximation of Ukraine's legislation to the norms and standards of the EU remains a key objective and will be reflected in the EU's technical assistance.

In the field of *environmental protection*, the cooperation will focus on nuclear safety and on implementation of the Kyoto protocol. Problems linked to the Danube and Black Sea environmental degradation, including wastewater treatment, and the preparation of the Kiev 2003 Environment Ministers Conference will also be addressed.

Co-operation in the *transport* sphere will include further integration of Ukraine's transport infrastructure, in particular ports, into the European transport network along Pan-European Transport Corridors, the Black Sea Pan European Transport Area (PETrA) and the Transport Corridor Europe Caucasus Asia (TRACECA).

In order to properly address all issues in priority areas for co-operation and with a view to EU enlargement, specific importance will be given to the strengthening of *regional and cross-border co-operation*.

In addition, in the field of science and technology co-operation, the aim is to sign a bilateral agreement this year. The possibilities for cooperation on space research will also be considered.

The Cooperation Council requested the Cooperation Committee and its sectorial Sub-Committees to ~~elaborate-identify~~ and monitor specific measures needed to achieve the above mentioned objectives.

Ministers had also a useful exchange of views on political issues of mutual interest, in particular on the political developments in Ukraine and the EU, as well as on a number of current international issues.