

26 October 2016

His Excellency Mark Rutte
Prime Minister, Minister of General Affairs
Binnenhof 19, Postbus 20001
2500 EA, The Hague, The Netherlands

**Object: Request for the Netherlands to unblock its full and unconditional ratification
of the *EU-Ukraine Association Agreement***

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

On behalf of the Ukrainian World Congress which represents the 20-million strong Ukrainian diaspora, including Ukrainians in the Netherlands, I urge you, Mr. Prime Minister to unblock the full and unconditional ratification by the Netherlands of the *EU-Ukraine Association Agreement* (Agreement).

As you are well aware, this Agreement focuses on support for core reforms in Ukraine, economic recovery and growth, governance and broad-ranged sector cooperation. With all of its key elements, this Agreement builds a long-term foundation for EU-Ukraine relations and serves as an instrument which reflects the strategic importance of these relations.

This Agreement was the catalyst for the EuroMaidan, when Ukrainians demonstrated unequivocally that they fully embrace European values and are willing to defend them at a great human cost.

Moreover, despite the ongoing deadly hybrid war being waged against Ukraine by the Russian Federation and its illegal occupation of Crimea, Ukraine continues to implement difficult reforms and bring the country in line with norms and standards enshrined in the EU's *Acquis Communautaire*. Full and unconditional ratification of this Agreement is critical to Ukraine continuing on this path.

The provisional application of this Agreement has already significantly impacted Ukraine by contributing to the adoption of major reforms and tangible measures to fight corruption.

This Agreement is also very beneficial for the Netherlands since it will open access to Ukraine's market of 45 million consumers, and once Ukraine aligns its business laws, regulations and procedures with European standards, trade with Ukraine for Dutch companies will essentially be the same as trading with any other EU member state.

At the beginning of 2016, the Netherlands was already the second largest investor in the economy of Ukraine and among the top three investor countries since 2013. These Dutch investments will be better protected by new competition rules that Ukraine will implement in accordance with this Agreement.

The consequences of not ratifying this Agreement are significant for both Ukraine and Europe as a whole. Ukrainians would receive a negative signal that Europeans lack confidence in Ukraine's democratic potential and ability to reform. Non-ratification of this Agreement would also call into question Europe's global image as a geopolitical block and throw the future of the EU's Eastern Partnership into question. Ultimately, this would open the door for the Russian Federation to continue pulling Ukraine into its sphere of influence – a goal the Russian Federation has never relinquished since the fall of the Soviet Union.

Impressing upon you the critical importance of this Agreement as an investment into the security, stability and prosperity of Europe, we strongly urge you to unblock the full and unconditional ratification of the *EU-Ukraine Association Agreement* by the Netherlands.

Sincerely,

UKRAINIAN WORLD CONGRESS



Eugene Czolij
President

The Ukrainian World Congress (UWC) is the international coordinating body for Ukrainian communities in the diaspora representing the interests of over 20 million Ukrainians. The UWC has a network of member organizations and ties with Ukrainians in 53 countries. Founded in 1967, the UWC was recognized in 2003 by the United Nations Economic and Social Council as a non-governmental organization with special consultative status.