

Remarks of Ukrainian World Congress President Eugene Czolij
at the Gala Dinner “U.S.-Ukraine: Partners in the Battle for Democracy and Security in Europe”
on 24 May 2017 in Washington, D.C.

Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

As President of the Ukrainian World Congress or the UWC, the international coordinating body of the Ukrainian diaspora representing the interests of 20 million Ukrainians in over 50 countries in the world, it was my pleasure to accept the invitation of Alexa Chopivsky, Executive Director of the American Center for a European Ukraine, for the UWC to partner in this very well-organized Gala Dinner.

Throughout its 50-year history, the UWC has always cherished and promoted the crucial U.S.-Ukraine relationship since the U.S. has not only been the beacon of democracy, but also a steadfast advocate and defender of justice, peace and security in the world.

On behalf of the UWC, the Ukrainian community in the United States led by UWC's member organization, the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America, and the whole Ukrainian diaspora, I congratulate this evening's honorees, Senator John McCain and Congressman Brendan Boyle and extend our sincere gratitude for your unwavering support for Ukraine which has already made a real difference in strengthening Ukraine's defence of its territorial integrity and in accelerating Ukraine's reforms.

I also wish to acknowledge and congratulate three renowned corporations, Bunge, Cargill and Westinghouse, for your impressive track record in investing in Ukraine. I assure you that, in the not so distant future, the whole business community will recognize your wise decisions and envy your success stories in doing business in Ukraine for we are witnessing the evolution of a new Ukraine – a Ukraine which is reforming; a Ukraine which is gradually and decisively moving toward full integration with the European community; and a Ukraine which is becoming more and more attractive to the outside world.

Recent success stories that attest to this include reforms in the energy sector that have led to the adjustment of domestic gas prices to European market levels and the elimination of Ukraine's dependence on Russian gas. New national anti-corruption institutions have begun their work and a huge step in combatting corruption was accomplished with e-declarations of assets by state officials. Judiciary reforms have started with the selection of new, independent and competent judges. Other reforms are targeting the deregulation of business activities and improving the business climate.

The imminent ratification of the *EU-Ukraine Association Agreement* will further support core reforms, economic growth, governance and sector co-operation in many areas.

These successes are, to a very great extent, attributable to Ukraine's vibrant civil society that arose from the EuroMaidan movement and continues to actively support the Ukrainian armed forces who are defending Ukraine's Eastern borders against Russian aggression, and concurrently work with Ukraine's governing authorities to drive and shape the reform agenda of the new, European Ukraine.

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Ukraine's strengths are numerous and its opportunities - great, particularly with an even stronger commitment from the international community, led by the United States, the architect of the Marshall Plan that enabled Europe to overcome the devastation of the Second World War.

On behalf of the global Ukrainian community, I thank the United States governing authorities, civil society and business community for your interest, support and confidence in Ukraine.

I assure you that you can rely on Ukraine and its EuroMaidan civil society that has proven, time and again, that it has the vision, strength, determination and discipline to overcome incredible odds.

I call upon you to further strengthen the U.S.-Ukraine partnership for the benefit of the United States and Ukraine, and for the protection of global peace and security.

With your continued support this partnership will undoubtedly become one of the biggest success stories of the 21st century.

Let's work together to attain such success.

Eugene Czolij

Ukrainian World Congress President