

Remarks by Guillaume Scheurer, on the occasion of the presentation of his Letter of Credence to President Petro Poroshenko, Kyiv, 9th December 2015

Mr. President,

I am deeply honored to have been appointed as the envoy of the Swiss Government to Ukraine. It is truly a privilege to serve in Ukraine, a country that is in the forefront in the fight for democracy and freedom.

Despite differences in size and background, our two countries have a long-standing history of friendship and good relations. We are confident that what has already connected us in the past will continue to connect us in the future and be even further strengthened as Ukraine has engaged under your leadership into a new path of freedom, democracy and rule of law. These principles will always be the guiding force in our quest to find common ground on points of bilateral and international policy.

I would like to confirm the interest of my government to continue our close cooperation at all levels. Let me underline that you, as well as the members of the Ukrainian Government, are always welcome in Berne. After our membership in the OSCE-Troika, the Swiss engagement in Ukraine will remain a priority.

Looking at the investment data published by the Swiss National Bank, the stock of Swiss direct investments in Ukraine reached USD 2.4 billion. These investments created over 32'000 jobs in Ukraine. Last year, for instance, one Swiss company alone invested USD 200 million in Ukraine.

The future development of Swiss direct investment in Ukraine depends mostly on Ukraine's political and economic framework. A lot of expectations are connected with the current reform process in Ukraine. Switzerland is not only following the reforms of the Ukrainian Government with a lot of interest and great attention but is also actively supporting these reforms.

Switzerland is determined to do its utmost to facilitate, within the framework of the applicable law, the return of the assets currently blocked in Switzerland (approx. USD 70 Mio.).

An excellent cooperation has developed between the Prosecutor General's Office of Ukraine and the Swiss authorities since 2014. The repatriation of frozen Ukrainian assets will eventually depend on progress made in the investigations led in Ukraine and in particular on judicial decisions establishing the illicit origin of the assets.

Switzerland supports Ukraine also bilaterally in the field of monetary assistance. The Federal Council has mandated the Swiss National Bank to grant, in parallel to the program of the IMF, to the National Bank of Ukraine a loan of USD 200 million.

Switzerland is ready to sign this bilateral loan agreement.

Switzerland is making every effort to contribute to a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Ukraine. Switzerland will continue to work toward a de-escalation of the conflict and to promote dialogue, particularly within the framework of the OSCE.

Switzerland will stay engaged in supporting a peaceful solution for the crisis in and around Ukraine by supporting the OSCE's activities, within the Trilateral Contact Group and bilaterally.

We realize that the other side fails to implement the Minsk package as required. We call on all parties to implement the Minsk Package. With regard to Crimea, I repeat the Swiss position adopted on 26 March 2014 condemning Russia's annexation as contravening international law and the principle of the territorial integrity of states in particular.

Since Ukrainian independence, Switzerland has been supporting Ukraine through a number of bilateral and multilateral cooperation projects.

For the period 2015-2018, Switzerland has doubled its technical cooperation budget in Ukraine (USD 100 Mio.). The new Cooperation Strategy will focus on the following domains: Governance and Peacebuilding, Human Security, Health, Sustainable Energy Management and Urban Development and Sustainable Economic Development. In addition, this year, Switzerland ranks among Top-8 donor countries for humanitarian funding to Ukraine.

Mr. President, I share with you the hope for a world where the people are free, the government democratically elected, and the nations at peace with each other.

Please accept my best wishes to you and your family, as well as to the people of your beautiful and great Nation.