



Statement by the U.S.-EU Partnership Committee for Ukraine

BERLIN, May 14, 2007 – The U.S.-EU Partnership Committee for Ukraine met on May 14, 2007 in Berlin at a meeting jointly hosted by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP) to discuss developments in Ukraine and ways to enhance Europe's opening to Ukraine's European and Euro-Atlantic aspirations.

The Committee welcomes the effort underway in Ukraine to find a compromise to the current political crisis, and hopes the effort will succeed. Continuing political conflict at the highest governmental levels, including the efforts to further dilute the existing divisions of power, is not what the Ukrainian people expected after they voted in national elections in December 2004 and March 2006. The Committee emphasizes the importance of the rule of law and recommends that any compromise address not only early Rada elections, but also the core legal issues and constitutional ambiguities that helped cause the crisis. The executive branch and Rada ultimately must work together. The Committee urges that all parties bear this in mind and that they conduct their electoral campaigns accordingly. All should avoid the temptation to exploit ethnic and language issues that will only sow division.

Ukraine needs coherent policies that advance the nation's interest. Absent such policies, the disillusionment of the people with their leaders will increase. Areas in which Ukraine's leaders should work together include energy security, creating a positive and more transparent business climate, completing WTO accession, and combating corruption.

The Committee urges U.S. and European leaders to remember that an independent, democratic, and market-oriented Ukraine will contribute to a more stable and secure Europe. Promoting such a Ukraine needs to be a policy priority for EU and U.S. leaders, despite frustration with Ukraine's internal political problems. The European Neighborhood Policy should be enhanced, but not as a substitute for potential EU membership for Ukraine. In the near term, developing the EU's relations with Ukraine, visa costs for Ukrainian citizens need to be reduced and Ukrainian students included in the EU's ERASMUS program. Enhancing Ukraine's relationship with Europe will also make more likely the prospect of a Russia that is democratic and deeply engaged with Europe.

The Committee believes that a timely and logical area for cooperation between the European Union and Ukraine is the security and reliability of energy supplies. The European Union depends on Ukraine as a transit corridor for natural gas and oil, while Ukraine looks toward an EU strategy that can help it integrate into Europe-wide energy networks. An important part of this equation is ensuring that arrangements for importing energy into and through Ukraine are transparent and minimize opportunities for corruption. Reform of Ukraine's energy sector, including with the help of the EBRD, can also reduce the country's dependence on energy imports, which will bring greater energy security and a more balanced relationship between Kyiv and Moscow.

With regard to prospects for Euro-Atlantic integration, the Committee considered several potential steps for enhancing Ukraine's cooperation with NATO. These included conducting public information initiatives within Ukraine to explain the benefits of closer engagement with the Alliance. In addition, Ukraine's regional role should be encouraged through Kyiv's involvement in various multilateral initiatives.

Members of the Partnership Committee present were CSIS Counselor and Trustee Dr. **Zbigniew Brzezinski**; former German Minister of Defense **Volker Rühle**; former Polish Foreign Minister **Bronislaw Geremek**; and former Norwegian Foreign Minister **Jan Petersen**. Also present were the project's four Task Force Directors: CSIS Director of the New European Democracies Project and CSIS Europe Program Senior Fellow **Janusz Bugajski**; former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine and CSIS Senior Adviser **Steven Pifer**; former U.S. Ambassador to Lithuania and CSIS Senior Associate **Keith Smith**; and Visiting Associate Professor at Georgetown University and CSIS Senior Associate **Celeste Wallander**.

For more information, please contact CSIS Director of Media Relations H. Andrew Schwartz at aschwartz@csis.org, (202) 775-3242.

###

The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) is a bipartisan, non-profit organization that seeks to advance global security and prosperity by providing strategic insights and practical policy solutions to decision makers.