

Press release

Brussels, 20th of September 2018

Defence MEPs support Ukraine's struggle to protect the country and its people

A delegation of the Security and Defence Subcommittee of the European Parliament, led by its chair Anna Fotyga (ECR, PL), visited Kyiv and Eastern Ukraine 16-20 September 2018.

During the meetings with local, national and international interlocutors as well as military personnel and leaders of the Crimean Tatar community, Members assessed the security situation in Eastern Ukraine and the prospects ahead, in particular as regards the various aspects of the implementation of the Minsk agreement.

Mrs Fotyga stressed: *“We have reiterated our firm condemnation of the Russian aggression and our strong support to the independence, sovereignty and unity of Ukraine and the policy of non-recognition of the illegal annexation of the Crimean peninsula. I like to underline that a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Eastern Ukraine requires the full implementation of the Minsk agreements and thus the respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. We have and we will pay particular attention to the emerging security situation in the Azov Sea, where Russia started to obstruct traffic and trade with multiplied inspections of commercial vessels, including ships of EU Member States”*

The delegation members underlined: *“We have visited the region to gather valuable information about the security situation in Eastern Ukraine and, foremost, as a sign of our solidarity and of our constant attention and concern for the conflict-affected people. Four years after the start of hostilities in Donbas and the illegal annexation of Crimea, Russian aggression is ongoing and casualties occur every day. So far over 10,000 people have been killed, 24.600 injured and there are more than 1.5 million IDPs and 1 million refugees. The dire humanitarian situation has even worsened over the past months and today some 3.4 million people on both sides of the contact line remain in need of humanitarian assistance. We greatly appreciate the tireless efforts by the EU, other international actors and non-governmental organisations, to alleviate the situation.”*

During the visit to Ukraine the delegation met with the leaders of the country, including leading members of the government, with MPs of the Rada, representatives of international organisations (EU Advisory Mission, OSCE monitors, UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM etc.) and civil society. Defence MEPs also undertook field visits to the areas close to the contact line in the Donbas region (Mariupol, Kramatorsk, Mayorsk, Talakivka, Avdiyivka), addressing the dire humanitarian and environmental situation.

Meetings with leaders of the country were held jointly with the MEPs of the EP Delegation to the EU-Ukraine Parliamentary Association Committee (PAC), which joined the 8th EU-Ukraine PAC meeting in Kiev in the same week.

The four-Member delegation, led by Anna Fotyga, the Chair of the Subcommittee, was composed of Michael Gahler (EPP, DE), Jaromir Štětina (EPP, CZ) and Arne Lietz (S&D, DE).