

**Speech by Mr Elmar BROK
at the Meeting of the Chairpersons of the Committees on Foreign Affairs of Parliaments
of the European Union and the Parliamentary Forum for Democracy**

28 November 2013, Vilnius

**THE EUROPEAN UNION EASTERN PARTNERSHIP:
The case of Ukraine**

Dear ladies, dear gentlemen,

I was hoping that my speech today would look different. Indeed a month ago I had the feeling that we could achieve our goal and have Ukraine sign up to the Agreement with us, an agreement which does not mean just more trade - it's an agreement which means that Ukraine (and its authorities) believe in democracy and in the rule of law and want to reform their country to ensure it is a reliable, stable, prosperous and democratic country.

Unfortunately things are not going this way. The door is still open, and we have been inviting Ukraine in, but for the moment its President refuses to enter.

What are the causes? Did we make mistakes? Did we set our standards too high? Did we not offer enough help?

I personally don't think so. I believe in the European Neighbourhood Policy and it think it can deliver but you need a serious commitment from our partners too that they really believe in European values.

I want to say that I believe in our neighbourhood policy in this particular moment when this policy is criticised and accused of failure.

One cannot say we did not offer help to our Ukrainian partners. The presence of Pat Cox is a testimony of the energies and time and efforts we have spent to try and help Ukraine sign this Agreement.

One can say perhaps that we were not quick enough to offer a package of measures to offset Russian pressure and that we have been too naive in thinking that our Russian partners would play by the rules of international law.

If there is a lesson to be learnt in all this is perhaps precisely this - that we have to act more strategically and use all our policies (trade, energy, migration) in a more coherent and strategic way. We have to learn this if we want to be a strong political actors in our neighbourhood. It's difficult because decisions have to be taken at 28 but we can do it if we have a strong leadership (and this is why I believe that we need a strong European External Action Service).

What should we do now? I think we should keep our door open and our eyes well open too. What is happening in Ukraine these days is worrying. The clash between pro-European and conservative forces risks splitting the country. We therefore must keep open the intense dialogue, support the pro-European forces and engage in a campaign to counteract the misinformation around the implications of the Association agreement.

So, despite the failed signature of the Association Agreement with Ukraine which overshadows the Vilnius Summit, I believe in the Eastern Partnership, and think that those who want to bury this project do not understand the nature of the transformation processes and the nature of this policy.

Those that argue that we lost in a geopolitical game against Russia, do not understand the European Union and its values. Those that argue, that we simply do not offer good enough incentives, fail to understand that sustainable democracy is the one and only foundation for stability, security and prosperity of the neighbourhood.

In fact the Russian pressures on our Eastern neighbours show that the ENP works and that in the Russian view, this policy is changing the Post-Cold war security architecture, something which they desperately try to avoid.

So I will not hide that I am disappointed today and that, yes, I would wish to have a different scenario today, but I think we need to focus now on what are the lessons learnt and the next steps.

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We were all looking forward to Vilnius, as we wanted to see the tangible results of the Eastern Partnership summit and we have some, like the initialling of the agreements with Moldova and Georgia. Change, transformation takes time and is not a linear process (it starts, it stops, it accelerates, it slows down). However we have started the process which I have no doubts will spill over.

Vilnius summit is not the end of the path - a path that we have only started in 2008 - but rather part of a process that will bring fruits only if all the partners are committed.

In only five years we have achieved a lot, when it comes to the changes in the Eastern neighbourhood. Perhaps some would argue that the steps that our partners are taking are slow and small, but transformation takes time and we need to recognize that our partners, such as Ukraine, Georgia or Moldova have been reforming their systems and institutions and that the elections in Georgia have been peaceful and fair. It all takes time.

It also takes commitment and will.

The will was lacking in the Ukraine case.

Let me quote Mr Pat Cox, who last week told us a very important thing in this respect: the Ukrainian authorities have not understood that we are an Europe of values, and not an Europe of value... He is totally right and we must explain this to our eastern partners and also explain that it is these values that bring real prosperity and progress.

I have heard, President Putin's advisor Sergei Glazyev argument that signature of the Association Agreement with the EU would be an 'economic suicide'. True many sectors of Ukrainian economy are closely linked with Russian economy. But are they the sectors which can provide a future for Ukrainian people against global competition? I don't think so. And do they want to tie their economic future to

Russia? People in the street of Kiev have understood that economic ties with Russia also mean less democracy, less freedom, no future for them.

It is in Ukraine's interest to stop this dependence and modernise its economy and this decision is not a purely economic one. It is a political choice.

It is fundamental that our **partners understand that now they need to re-double** their transformation efforts to fulfil the political, legal and economic criteria. I hope they will use this chance well, as **the reforms that they are implementing now will serve the future generations and create the prosperity in their countries.**

We, in the European Parliament, remain very committed to the association agenda, but our neighbours need to progress more in their reforms to build strong, democratic institutions, also in order to resist better external pressures.

From my side, I am convinced that **we need to give greater priority to the Neighbourhood and show our solidarity.** Therefore, as I was saying before, we **must use all the instruments we have which can support our friends.**

We should also **mobilize more resources** and **work better with the international institutions** and focus together on filling the economic gaps and dismantle the dependence of some economic sectors in the Eastern neighbourhood.

The lesson we should learn, therefore, is that we need to adapt our tools and instruments to the changing situations in the neighbourhood, and at the same time understand that the EU, if it wants to be a real global power, must become **security provider not only for the Europeans but also for our neighbours.**

I hope that in next months and years, we can work closely with our partners and make sure that they are able to take **sovereign decisions.** I believe we have tools and instruments to help us in this road and support our partners. I will be a strong advocate of using them.