

Conference
«The first year of operation of the Qualification and Disciplinary Commission of Prosecutors and Council of Prosecutors of Ukraine: achievements, challenges, prospects»

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Mr Prosecutor General, Members of the Parliament

Esteemed Judges, Prosecutors, Distinguished Guests,

I am very honoured to welcome you to today's Conference. This event is dedicated to the 1st year anniversary of the Qualification and Disciplinary Commission of Prosecutors of Ukraine and the Council of Public Prosecutors.

I would like to congratulate the Ukrainian prosecutorial community on this occasion, given the importance of the set-up of these new institutions in the context of the public prosecution reform in Ukraine, and their significant role in enhancing the independence, professionalism, integrity and effectiveness of the prosecution service.

Let me use this opportunity to refer to the letter transmitted by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to the Prosecutor General of Ukraine in 2016 when the Prosecutor General took his office:

“Transformation of the Ukrainian prosecution system into a modern institution of European standard implies strengthening the external independence of the service and individual independence of prosecutors, introducing modern methods of operation of the prosecution service, enhancing its transparency and accountability. The reform should go hand in hand with measures aimed at combating corruption. All these efforts are essential to achieving public confidence in the institution and its effectiveness” – the Secretary General wrote.

Today's Conference, two years later, provides a forum for reflection on many of the mentioned points in the light of the acknowledged key developments within the prosecution reform process, in particular as regards the set-up of the prosecutorial self-governance and support bodies.

It is to be reiterated that the recent Constitutional changes on justice, the new legal framework along with new institutional structures already in place, provide a solid platform towards ensuring a modern, independent and effective system of public prosecution in line with Council of Europe standards.

Ukraine enjoys support from many European and non-European countries. This was repeated in the recent 2nd Ukraine Reform Conference in Copenhagen on 27 June. The message given by participating States is full support for the Ukrainian reforms. At the same time, many participants highlighted that reforms should be sped up and that the limited time before the next elections should be used to finalise the reform process.

The aim of the reform of the Judiciary is to build a modern Judiciary in which the population would place full trust. This is the ultimate criteria for the success of our common endeavour. Currently, the effective implementation of the reforms which have been carried out, as well as the completion of the reforms, are the goal the we should achieve.

This requires a comprehensive approach which includes strategic vision and political will, as well as an inclusive preparatory process with professional discussions both within the prosecution system and with other stakeholders, including the Ukrainian civil society.

The Council of Europe's experts and other experts participating in today's meeting will, during the day, explain in detail how this process should be carried out. Cooperation with the Ukrainian authorities has always been very positive. The Council of Europe issued an Opinion on the respective draft law, in which acknowledged that the proposed amendments to the Law on the PPO will, in many respects, assist the purpose of strengthening the independence of the Qualification and Disciplinary Commission of Prosecutors and the prosecutorial support arrangements. It also indicated where

progress or amendments should be made to ensure that it addresses more effectively a number of matters concerning the prosecutorial self-governance and support arrangements on which the Venice Commission Joint Opinion of 2013 and the GRECO Report have made recommendations.

The Council of Europe trusts that the Opinion will contribute to further aligning the draft Law concerned with Council of Europe standards before its adoption by the Parliament of Ukraine.

Our Organisation stands ready to provide further support in this regard and the related reform processes, thus a relevant regulatory, institutional and operational framework is in place, providing for appropriate arrangements with a view to ensuring the effective functioning of the prosecutorial self-governance and support bodies.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To conclude, let me express my gratitude to all national stakeholders, non-governmental and international counterparts for their cooperation and firm commitment to our continuous joint initiatives aimed at improving the human rights situation and strengthening the rule of law in Ukraine.

There is a clear commitment from the Ukrainian authorities as a Council of Europe member State to fully implement the ECHR. What we are discussing today should not be seen as technical issues but a means to realise the objectives of the Council of Europe : human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

I wish you and I wish us a great success.