



United States Department of State

***Assistant Secretary of State
for European and Eurasian Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20520***

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1612 K Street, NW, Suite 1200
Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear members of the Central and East European Coalition:

Thank you for your letter of October 23, 2013, expressing concern about Russian pressure on its neighbors on the eve of the European Union's (EU) Eastern Partnership Summit. The White House has asked me to underscore to you our support for the Eastern Partnership and for the right of the six Eastern Partnership countries to choose their own future.

The Department of State fully shares your concerns about Russian pressure on several Eastern Partnership countries, including Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, and Armenia. We support the sovereign right of these countries to make independent choices and would welcome their closer relationship with the EU. Any form of pressure to prevent sovereign states from pursuing greater integration with the EU, or other organizations of their choosing, contravenes Russia's obligations under the Helsinki Principles of the OSCE and the Charter of Paris, which commit participating states to respect each country's "right freely to define and conduct as it wishes its relations with other States in accordance with international law." Russia's WTO obligations include a commitment to a non-discriminatory trading system.

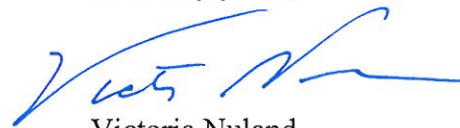
At the November 28-29 Summit in Vilnius, EU Members will decide whether to sign an Association Agreement and a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area Agreement – also known as a DCFTA – with Ukraine, and whether to initial similar agreements with Moldova and Georgia. This is a historic moment for all three of these countries, and for their dream of one day being fully integrated into Europe. All three have worked hard to bring their judicial and law enforcement structures closer to EU standards, and to prepare their political systems and economic and energy markets for greater integration with Europe. Ukraine has passed over eighteen pieces of implementing legislation to prepare for Vilnius. Georgia and Moldova have met the requirements for initialing their Association Agreements, completed their respective DCFTA negotiations, and embarked on key judicial sector reforms. In each case, these reforms reflect a national political consensus that these countries' future lies with Europe.

The United States strongly supports the Eastern Partnership process as a key ingredient in our effort to cement a "Europe whole and free and at peace" – a shared policy goal of the United States and EU member states since the Berlin Wall fell almost 25 years ago. We have been working in lockstep with our European allies to help Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia meet the tough conditions for a "yes" vote at Vilnius. Historically, we have supported them through programs such as the Support for East European Democracy (SEED) Act, the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program, and NATO enlargement. We are also working to align future U.S.

assistance with that of the EU so that after Vilnius, countries who have signed or initialed can stick to the politically difficult path of reform as their ties with Europe deepen, lending support for the EU's "more for more" principle. We note in this regard that any form of pressure to prevent sovereign states from pursuing greater integration with the EU, or any organization of their choosing, would contravene obligations under the OSCE Helsinki Principles and the Charter of Paris. We have been working with the EU and each candidate country to anticipate and prepare them for any negative reaction to their choice, whether it comes from inside or outside their countries. We all benefit when our neighbors open their markets, and become more stable and prosperous.

We have taken every opportunity to engage the leadership in the EU and Eastern Partnership countries. The President discussed the importance of the European choice of these countries at the August Baltic Summit and in Stockholm with Nordic leaders in September. Secretary Kerry highlighted the importance of the Eastern Partnership to EU Foreign Ministers both in Vilnius and in Warsaw this fall, and my team and I have been working to build consensus for a positive outcome at the Vilnius Summit. I discussed the Eastern Partnership in depth with my European counterparts during my October 20-25 trip to London, Paris, Berlin, and Brussels and my October 31-November 5 trip to Budapest, Warsaw, and Kyiv, including with President Yanukovich personally on November 4. Our team – in embassies throughout Europe and in Washington – is working to ensure that the Eastern Partnership advances stability, rule of law and economic growth in the partner countries. Ukraine, in particular, has more work to do to meet the EU's strict conditions, and we have encouraged political leaders there to take these last steps before Vilnius.

Sincerely yours,



Victoria Nuland