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Ukraine – Meeting between Jean-Yves Le Drian and his counterpart (Paris, 05.02.18) - France-Diplomatie

3-4 minutes

Jean-Yves Le Drian received his Ukrainian counterpart, Pavlo Klimkin, today in Paris. This meeting provided an opportunity to examine the prospects for strengthening our bilateral relations, take stock of the reform process in Ukraine and reaffirm our efforts to implement the Minsk agreements, which are the only way to find a political solution to the conflict.

With respect to the reform process, the minister for Europe and foreign affairs encouraged the important transformation efforts by Ukraine to move closer toward European governance standards, in spite of the difficult security context in the country on its eastern border. The recent visa liberalization and the entry into force of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement are tangible signs of our rapprochement and solidarity with the Ukrainians. Significant progress has been made with respect to cleaning up the banking system as well as with respect to energy sector reform and the development of a legislative and institutional mechanism to combat corruption. Together with its European and G7 partners, France supports Ukraine's efforts to implement these reforms and will lend its full support to their implementation. All efforts must focus on the fight against corruption, especially through the establishment of an operational and independent anti-corruption court.

The ministers also welcomed the cooperation projects between our two countries. French firms have a strong presence in Ukraine and many others are planning to establish themselves there. There are major projects underway in the renewable energy and sustainable urban development sectors. These are all future pillars of a strong and lasting cooperative relationship. In particular, France would like to make progress with respect to exchanges between civil society and young people. As such, the Ukrainian decision to make the 2018-2019 academic year the "Year of the French language in Ukraine" will contribute to strengthening our human ties.

Jean-Yves Le Drian and Pavlo Klimkin also addressed the situation in the eastern part of the country. France is attached to the sovereignty of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders and does not recognize the illegal annexation of Crimea. The crisis is continuing in the eastern part of the country, where it is leading to casualties every week and where the population is struggling under difficult living conditions. France, which together with Germany, is acting as a mediator, calls on Russia to implement the Minsk agreements, especially in the area of security, and expects Ukraine to continue implementing the measures concerning it. Our goal

remains a comprehensive political resolution of the crisis, the improvement of the security situation – which requires full compliance with the cease-fire – and the re-establishment of socio-economic ties between both sides of the line of contact.