



MEDIA RELEASE:
**AUSTRALIANS STAND FOR DEMOCRACY IN UKRAINE:
SYDNEY & MELBOURNE RALLIES ON THURSDAY 28th**

Australians will hold solidarity rallies with Ukraine's pro-democracy and pro-Europe movement and call on the Australian Government to support Ukraine's democratisation.

The rallies will be held simultaneously in Sydney and Melbourne on Thursday, November 28th. The Sydney rally will be outside NSW Parliament House on Macquarie Street, Sydney from 4.30pm to 6.30pm. The Melbourne rally will be outside the State Library of Victoria on Swanston Street, Melbourne from 4pm to 8pm.

Marie Ficarra MLC, NSW Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier, who yesterday returned from mass rallies and high-level meetings in Ukraine, will address the Sydney rally.

"As Australians, we benefit from democracy, and cultural and human rights. These rights are increasingly denied to 40 million Ukrainians by President Yanukovich, including by his decision not to pursue European integration for Ukraine," Mr Pete Shmigel of the Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations, said.

"Yanukovich puts his oligarchical interests ahead of Ukrainians' desire for a democratic and prosperous society. First, he imprisoned former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko. Then, he turned away from Europe and faced toward Putin's authoritarianism. Now, our community's President who is an Australian eyewitness on the scene in Kyiv reports that Yanukovich is using security forces against demonstrators.

"Yanukovich's actions are condemnable. Ukraine wants Europe – not Putin. Ukraine wants democracy – not dictatorship. Ukraine wants free and fair elections – not Yanukovich and his criminal cronies.

"As Australians, we stand in solidarity with protestors in Ukraine, and call on Yanukovich to ensure their right to voice their concerns about their country.

"As Australians, we call on Yanukovich to reverse his decision before tomorrow's Vilnius Summit, and announce a timetable for Euro-integration, democratic reform and the release of political prisoners.

"As Australians, we advise Yanukovich that Ukrainian Australian organisations and community members are in contact with the Government of Australia, and have requested that Australia formally express its concerns regarding your Government's failure to pursue the EU / Ukraine Association Agreement," Mr Shmigel said.

Member of the community can join in solidarity by signing the Open Letter to President Yanukovich that will be presented to Embassy of Ukraine officials by the AFUO:
<http://www.change.org/petitions/sign-below-to-share-your-support-of-ukrainian-democracy-european-intergration>.

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