



STATEMENT BY UKRAINIAN AUSTRALIANS' PRESIDENT FROM KYIV

AFUO CONDEMNS YANUKOVYCH & SALUTES UKRAINE'S PEOPLE'S VICTORY

The Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations (AFUO) condemns President Yanukovich's failure to sign the EU integration agreement, while saluting the Ukrainian people's victory that is the new "Maidan Movement".

Mr Stefan Romaniw OAM, President of the AFUO, who has been in Kyiv and participating in the events of the last month, said:

"Yanukovich did not sign at Vilnius, but hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians have 'signed with their feet' in Ukraine's pro-democracy and pro-sovereignty protests, and they will continue to do so until their country is their own.

"On behalf of Ukrainian Australians, I will be personally communicating to the current Government of Ukraine our condemnation and disgust at President Yanukovich's weak leadership and betrayal.

"I say to President Yanukovich: change course or your Government will not survive. Ukrainians will take back their country.

"It is clear from what I have seen that Ukraine's people - especially young people and students, be they of the west or the east, be they of Ukrainian or other ethnicity - have started their democratic victory. They have stood up and united in opposition to a regime listening to Putin and not listening to their national, economic, and cultural aspirations.

"Vilnius is the catalyst of change in Ukraine - not a conclusion. 'Maidan' is not a moment - it is an irreversible movement. AFUO and Ukrainians in Australia will continue to stand with pro-democratic forces as the people 'sign up' for reform and we encourage them to individual 'sign up' for Euro-integration and democratic principles.

"We need the Australian Government to recognize the changing situation and further engaging. This includes: working with the international community that's increasingly concerned with Yanukovich's growing disregard of basic human rights, as noted by Amnesty International; considering personal sanctions, and; supporting fair elections.

The AFUO, peak body for Ukrainian Australians, is a member of the Ukrainian World Congress, the leading body for diasporan Ukrainians, of which Mr Romaniw is also General Secretary.

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