



Association of the Councils of State and Supreme Administrative
Jurisdictions of the European Union i.n.p.a.

Association des Conseils d'Etat et des Juridictions administratives
suprêmes de l'Union européenne a.i.s.b.l.

ACA-Europe General Assembly in Helsinki

Helsinki

WELCOME SPEECH

by MYKHAILO SMOKOVYCH

Honourable members of the General Assembly!

Honourable KARI KUUSINIEMI!

(President of the Supreme Administrative Court of Finland,

President of ACA-Europe)

Dear Colleagues!

True Friends of Ukraine!

I. I sincerely welcome each of you to the meeting of the General Assembly!

I am deeply grateful for the invitation and the excellent organization of today's event on the shores of the Gulf of Finland in the Baltic Sea. Since ancient times, Helsinki, the capital of Scandinavia, has impressed with its unique blend of Northern European architecture, the Nordic cultural traditions of the Scandinavian peoples, and its breathtaking natural beauty.

Cooperation between Ukraine and Finland is of great importance, especially in these difficult times of a full-scale invasion by the rashist aggressor.

We are profoundly thankful to all those who **support the Ukrainian people** amid Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine, our independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity. We also thank everyone who stands with us **in the defence of European democratic values**.

Last year, (on April 3, 2024) **Ukraine and the Republic of Finland signed the Agreement on Security Cooperation and Long-Term Support**.



I would like to emphasize that Finland's contribution to helping the Ukrainian people is truly invaluable.

Finland continues to provide temporary protection to citizens who have fled Ukraine due to Russian aggression, supporting their well-being in accordance with EU standards.

In January of this year, Finland approved the 27th aid package, valued at nearly 200 million euros. At the end of February, Helsinki announced a program worth 660 million euros, under which new defence equipment was ordered from the Finnish defence industry to support Ukraine.

Soon, Finland will transfer heavy ammunition to Ukraine, funded by income from frozen assets of the Russian Federation (the amount of aid will be 90 million euros).

Since the beginning of the full-scale war of aggression, the total value of **Finnish military support** to Ukraine—including defence equipment and ammunition—has exceeded 3 billion euros.

Ukrainians are deeply grateful to Finland, which remains steadfast in its support for Ukraine both nationally and within the European Union and the EU mechanism for Ukraine (*the Ukraine Facility*). Finland's commitment extends to Ukraine's recovery, reconstruction, and modernization reforms, which are essential components of Ukraine's path to EU accession.

II. Dear colleagues! The Ukrainian people are firmly on the path to the European Union. The constitutional enshrinement of the European identity of the Ukrainian people and the irreversibility of Ukraine's European integration course represent a crucial milestone in the strategic development of the Ukrainian state.

The European integration vector of state policy is being realized through comprehensive reforms across legal, institutional, and socio-economic domains.

In 2024, the **negotiation process** for Ukraine's membership in the European Union was officially **launched**, marking a **significant stage** in Ukraine's political, legal, and institutional transformation in line with European standards.



The Association of the Councils of State and Supreme Administrative Jurisdictions of the European Union plays a vital role in strengthening legal unity and fostering mutual understanding within the administrative justice systems of EU Member States.

As a candidate country for EU accession, Ukraine is honoured to participate in the activities of the General Assembly. Engagement in the European Assembly's work facilitates the deeper integration of the Ukrainian judicial system into the European legal space, promotes **the exchange of experience**, and supports the **implementation of European standards** in administrative justice.

For judges of administrative courts in Ukraine, it is extremely important to:

- deepen their understanding of European Union law;
- familiarize themselves with the law enforcement practices of other national administrative jurisdictions operating within the framework of EU law;
- strengthen mutual trust between higher administrative courts, which forms the foundation of a common European legal space;
- ensure access to decisions of higher administrative courts that apply and interpret EU law;
- enhance the efficiency of administrative justice **through the exchange of experience.**

I would like to emphasize the importance of today's institutional platform for fostering in-depth **dialogue among judges of administrative courts from European countries**. This dialogue contributes to the harmonization of administrative case-law and the establishment of uniform standards of justice.

III. Dear participants of the General Assembly! In a democratic society, **administrative justice** plays a vital role. **An effective system of administrative judicial proceedings** is an essential attribute of the law-governed state and a guarantor of the protection of human rights.

Dear colleagues! The judiciary in Ukraine holds **a strategic role on the path toward European integration**. The implementation of European Union and Council of Europe



standards is **an institutional necessity** that underpins the foundation of a democratic state governed by the rule of law.

This year marks the **20th anniversary** of the Code of Administrative Procedure of Ukraine. The adoption of this codified act represents a historic milestone in the establishment of Ukraine as a democratic law-governed state.

Over 20 years of full-fledged operation of the administrative justice system in Ukraine, **administrative courts** have become **a guarantor** of the rule of law in public legal relations, ensuring effective protection of citizens' rights and freedoms in disputes with government authorities.

In light of Ukraine's European integration path, the need to further align the national administrative justice system with the legal standards of the European Union has become particularly urgent.

IV. Dear colleagues! In cooperation with the General Assembly, we participated *yesterday* in the colloquium titled "Dialogue with the European Court of Human Rights – Advisory Opinions under Protocol No. 16 to the Convention and the Impact of the Court's Judgements at the National Level."

Ukraine's European integration entails not only EU membership but also **a profound transformation of national institutions**, primarily the judiciary. **The judicial system serves as a key indicator of a state's democratic capacity** and its ability to guarantee **the rule of law**, a fundamental principle of the European legal order.

I would like to emphasize that Ukraine is actively engaged in dialogue with EU institutions in the field of justice, working on integrating judgments of **the European Union** into its legal framework, as well as **improving mechanisms for the judicial protection of human rights** through the legal instrument of Protocol No. 16 to the European Convention on Human Rights.

In contemporary Ukrainian law enforcement practice, there is a clear tendency toward **the systematic application of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights**.



Ukrainian courts take into account the provisions of the Convention and the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) when considering cases, interpret and apply national norms in light of the standards established by the ECHR. The Supreme Court and other courts of Ukraine actively integrate the ECHR jurisprudence into their rulings, which contributes to the unification of case-law, the development of national law, and its harmonization with European standards.

Moreover, this demonstrates **the recognition of ECHR judgments as a crucial reference point for ensuring the rule of law** in Ukraine, as well as **the active incorporation of the Convention's provisions and ECHR case law into the national legal system**. This also reflects **the dynamic evolution of European standards** of human rights protection in Ukraine.

The implementation of EU standards strengthens the rule of law and the right to a fair trial, while enhancing guarantees for the protection of human rights at the national level.

V. Dear participants of the General Assembly! I would like to emphasize the importance of the European Association's events dedicated to discussing pressing issues of administrative justice, particularly the interaction between national courts and the European Court of Human Rights, as well as the implementation of its jurisprudence at the national level.

I sincerely wish **my European colleagues fruitful cooperation**, effective **exchange of professional experience**, and new achievements in our shared mission to strengthen the law-governed state, establish the rule of law, and protect fundamental human rights and freedoms.

I am deeply grateful for the invitation and the excellent organization of this event, and I look forward to further fruitful cooperation.

On behalf of the Ukrainian people, I extend sincere and boundless gratitude to all European partners for their invaluable support of Ukraine throughout its integration process into the European Union.



Association of the Councils of State and Supreme Administrative
Jurisdictions of the European Union i.n.p.a.

Association des Conseils d'Etat et des Juridictions administratives
suprêmes de l'Union européenne a.i.s.b.l.

I am confident that, through our joint efforts and alongside you—our sincere friends and colleagues, in particular, from Finland—Ukraine will deliver a worthy rebuff to the rashist aggressor, achieve Victory, and become a full member of the European Union.

Dear colleagues, I wish you all **a peaceful sky**, an indomitable spirit, encouragement in realizing your professional goals, and fruitful work in **establishing the rule of law, strengthening democratic values, and fostering the prosperity of our independent, legal, European states!**

Thank you for your attention!

Glory to Ukraine!