

Ukraine to Continue Trade Deal Talks With EU

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The presidents of Ukraine and the European Commission have agreed to continue talks regarding association and free-trade deals that Ukraine last month said it would postpone.

"The European Commission stands ready to discuss aspects of implementation related to the agreements already initialed, but not to reopen any kind of negotiations," the European Commission said in a statement Monday.

Ukrainian President Yanukovych phoned European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso, asking him "to receive a delegation from Ukraine to have a discussion on some aspects of the association agreement and the deep and comprehensive free-trade area," the statement reads.

Barroso, in turn, confirmed that the delegation would be received "at the appropriate level."

In an interview with Ukrainian television late Monday, Yanukovych said the agreements were prepared "hastily" and he wanted to renegotiate the terms of the deals so that they favored Ukrainian manufacturers.

In the conversation with Barroso, Yanukovych also "explicitly confirmed the intention to investigate the use of force by Ukrainian police" during rallies over the weekend that left more than 300 police and protesters injured. Yanukovych also vowed to inform the public about the results.

Yanukovych admitted that the crackdown on the protest was too violent.

"Law enforcement officers overreacted on Friday night, and there is no justification for that. But we are fully aware that someone or something provoked them," the Ukrainian leader said.

Ukrainian Prime Minister Mykola Azarov said Yanukovych assured Barroso that both he and his government were ready for talks with the protesters, as proposed by the Ukrainian parliament's speaker on Sunday.

Azarov said that although the government saw the signs of a coup being plotted, the country's leadership was currently determined "to show restraint."

"We know that a plan to take the parliament by force is being prepared," he said.

Ukraine stunned EU leaders last month by announcing that it was suspending the signing of free-trade and association agreements with the EU after months of Russia warning its neighbor not to sign them. The announcement triggered a wave of protests throughout Ukraine.

The demonstrations, which had until this weekend been largely peaceful, took a sour turn Saturday morning, when police violently cleared Kiev's Independence Square. The unrest continued Sunday afternoon as mobs attempted to storm the country's presidential administration.

The premier said that neither he nor the president was informed about a planned crackdown on the protesters.

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