

Ukraine Hopes to Sign EU Political Association Deal Next Week, President Says

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A file photo of Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk speaking at a news conference.

Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk has said he hopes to sign the political chapters of an EU association agreement next week, after meeting with U.S. President Barack Obama in Washington.

"I am sure that next week Ukraine will sign the political part of the association agreement and take a firm step to make Ukraine part of the European Union," Yatsenyuk said, UNIAN news agency reported Thursday.

On Wednesday, Yatsenyuk attended a meeting in the White House with Obama, who reiterated his support for Kiev while admonishing Russia for its incursion in Crimea.

The U.S. has made "very clear that we consider Russia's incursion into Crimea outside of its bases to be a violation of international law," Obama said, adding that the international community would "be forced to apply a cost" if Russia does not remove its troops from the Black Sea peninsula.

Obama also called on the U.S. Congress to move quickly to deliver an aid package to Ukraine, including a \$1 billion dollar loan to help facilitate the May 25 presidential elections.

According to a transcript published on the White House website, Yatsenyuk said the military challenge posed by Russia was the most pressing obstacle faced by the new government in Kiev.

"It's all about the freedom. We fight for our freedom. We fight for our independence. We fight for our sovereignty. And we will never surrender."

However, Ukraine was "absolutely ready and open for talks" with Russia, Yatsenyuk added.

On Friday, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry will meet with Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov as the two nations seek to find a negotiated solution to the crisis in Crimea.

Crimean authorities will hold a referendum on Sunday to decide whether the peninsula should become a part of Russia

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