

STRASBOURG, France, October 11, 2013 /PRNewswire/ --

The Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament has become the latest influential body to back Ukraine's signing of the Association Agreement in Vilnius in November, which could then be ratified as early as spring 2014.

The Committee Thursday approved a report prepared by co-chair of Euronest, Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, which recommended the agreement should go ahead if Ukraine "meets the necessary conditions".

This would mean at least a conditional release from prison for jailed former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, which is presently being negotiated by the European Parliament.

One of her lawyers, Serhiy Vlasenko, said in the past week that his client welcomes efforts by the European Parliament's envoys to Ukraine, Pat Cox and Aleksander Kwasniewski, to have her pardoned by Ukraine's President Viktor Yanukovich. That pardon would be conditional on her leaving Ukraine and agreeing not to return.

News that the Foreign Affairs Committee is willing to back Ukraine's Association Agreement means yet another important European body is now in line with Kiev's agenda. As far back as May the European Commission said

European Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee Backs Ukraine's Association Agreement

Written by Australian Business

Ukraine

deserves the deal, which will also trigger a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement.

European Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, Stefan Fule, has also advocated

Ukraine's

inclusion, while in the past few weeks European MPs have also voiced their support.

Thirty MPs from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) joined forces to praise the "continuing efforts of the Ukrainian authorities" in passing laws and introducing constitutional changes in line with EU criteria.

"We welcome the continuing efforts of the Ukrainian authorities towards the implementation of reforms," they said in a joint declaration.

Ukraine has embarked on a wave of reforms to fulfil Europe's Association Agreement terms. These include a major overhaul of the tax code, pension reform, ease of doing business measures, and visa-free travel with EU states.

And it has been done with broad support from most parties. On a single day in September, parliament passed five laws crucial to its European ambitions with the support of all parties except for the Communists.

SOURCE Ukraine Monitor