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PRESS RELEASE(98)155

18 December 1998

NATO-UKRAINE COMMISSION

**MEETING AT DEFENCE MINISTERS LEVEL
HELD AT NATO HEADQUARTERS, BRUSSELS
ON 18TH DECEMBER 1998**

STATEMENT

The NATO-Ukraine Commission (NUC) met today in Defence Ministerial Session. Ministers welcomed the results of the Commission meeting at Foreign Ministers level at NATO HQ 9th December, in particular the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on the appointment of two NATO Liaison Officers to Ukraine. The officers are expected to take up their duties in Kyiv early in 1999.

Ministers reviewed the implementation of a wide range of activities related to defence and military cooperation between NATO and Ukraine. They underlined the progress achieved in the framework of PfP, noting in particular the progress made in fulfilling Ukraine's Individual Partnership Programme and its active participation in the PfP Planning and Review Process. They expressed their strong support for the work of the Joint Working Group on Defence Reform. NATO Ministers welcomed progress to date and encouraged Ukraine to continue efforts for greater efficiency and flexibility while also developing its interoperability with NATO forces as a means of further enhancing its contribution to future peacekeeping operations. NATO Ministers also supported Ukraine's efforts in developing its cooperation with neighbouring countries in the framework of multinational formations. The successful implementation of all these initiatives is essential in view of Ukraine's strategic goal of gradual integration into European and trans-Atlantic structures.

Ministers reviewed the situation in Former Yugoslavia. NATO Ministers welcomed Ukraine's continued support to SFOR and its recent decision to contribute an aircraft to the NATO Air Verification Mission in Kosovo. They confirmed that these measures underlined the importance of the role played by Ukraine in international peacekeeping.

Ministers expressed their continuing support for efforts to enhance cooperation in the field of defence and reiterated the importance which they attach to the NATO-Ukraine Commission as the key political forum for developing the distinctive partnership to which they are committed. They strongly welcomed the decision to hold a meeting of the Commission at the level of Heads of State and Government in the context of the Washington Summit.