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Kiev, EU sign 'political provisions' of association deal

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European Council President Herman Van Rompuy says Ukraine's interim government has signed the "political" provisions of an association agreement with the EU.

"Signing [the] political part [of the] EU-Ukraine Association Agreement symbolizes [the] importance of relations [and] will to take it further," Van Rompuy said in message on his Twitter account on Friday.

The 28-nation bloc and the new Ukrainian government signed the core chapters of the Association Agreement on the sidelines of a meeting of EU leaders in Brussels on Thursday.

The document reportedly carries the signatures of Van Rompuy, Ukraine's interim Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk, European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso as well as the heads of the 28-nation bloc.

The association agreement between the EU and Ukraine was initially to be signed last November. However, Ukraine's then president, Viktor Yanukovych, refrained from signing the deal in favor of closer ties with neighboring Russia.

Yanukovych's refusal to sign the accord triggered turmoil in the country, with months of unrest that led to the ouster of Yanukovych on February 23. He has travelled to Russia, where he was given sanctuary.

On March 11, Yanukovych said in a public statement that he is still Ukraine's legitimate president and commander-in-chief. The ousted president also stated that he has never fled his country and promised to return.