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## **Tymoshenko the final hurdle in new EU deal**

The European Union and Ukraine have finished negotiations on a landmark co-operation agreement, but whether the bloc signs the deal still hinges on the treatment of Yulia Tymoshenko, the EU president said yesterday.

The EU has strongly condemned the October sentencing of the former premier and opposition leader to seven years in prison, dismissing the verdict as politically motivated and calling for her release.

The agreement outlines deep political and economic co-operation between Ukraine and the 27-nation bloc it aspires to join.

"Today we can publicly announce that negotiations on the association agreement have been finalised," Herman van Rompuy said at the conclusion of a summit in Kiev. But he added that signing would depend on political circumstances and "our strong concern is primarily related to the politically motivated justice in Ukraine and the Tymoshenko case".