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Bucharest, Kiev sign cooperation protocol for Ukraine's accession to the EU

FM Baconschi: Romania has no territorial claims against Ukraine.

Foreign Minister Teodor Baconschi said yesterday, on the second day of his visit to Kiev, that Romania has no territorial claims against Ukraine, in response to a question from Interfax Ukraine.

"I want to give an unambiguous answer to this question. Romania is a supporter of the inviolability of borders. We have no claims against the territorial integrity of other countries," Baconschi said, according to 'Kyiv Post,' quoted by Mediafax.

The statement was made after a meeting between Baconschi and his Ukrainian counterpart Konstantin Grishchenko, on whose invitation the Romanian chief of diplomacy travelled to Kiev. Talks between the two officials focused on the current stage of bilateral ties and means to develop the bilateral relationship, but also on European topics and the Romanian-Ukrainian cooperation within the European Union's Eastern Partnership and on progress and conditions in negotiations on Ukraine's Association Agreement with the EU.

"Romania's support for Ukraine's European path is constant and will become increasingly vocal. We hope that both the Association Agreement and the Free Trade Agreement will be finalised as soon as possible. Through its history, culture and economy, Ukraine is a country that belongs to the European space," Baconschi said, according to a press release from the Foreign Affairs Ministry.

In his turn, Grishchenko thanked Romania for the support and voiced hope that the protocol signed yesterday between the two countries' foreign ministries would be an important document for Ukraine's EU accession and for bilateral ties.

The two officials also discussed issues of mutual concern in order to strengthen good neighborhood relations, focusing on political dialogue and an improvement in the activity of joint working bodies, cooperation on environment protection and efforts to protect national minorities. In the context, Baconschi demanded that the joint inter-governmental commission for minorities' protection resume activity.

"I am convinced that the standards applied in order to respect the rights of Romanian minorities in Ukraine and the Ukrainian minorities in Romania will grow, according to Council of Europe standards and European regulations in general. These two communities are bridges between our countries and societies," Baconschi said. Talks also focused on economic cooperation and security issues, including the Transdnister conflict. The two ministers added that there is real political wish on both sides to quickly normalise bilateral ties and underlined that they would continue efforts to normalise the bilateral legal framework. On the occasion, a collaboration agreement was also signed between the two countries' justice ministries. Ukraine and Romania also agreed to open several border check points at their border, Grishchenko said after the talks. While in Kiev, Baconschi was also set to meet with President Viktor Yanukovich, PM Mykola Azarov and Chairman of the Rada, Volodimir Litvin. The minister was also scheduled to meet with representatives of the Romanian community in Ukraine.