

**Speech of EaP CSF Steering Committee Co-Chair Krzysztof Bobiński for the
presentation of a special award to Chancellor Angela Merkel**

*7th Annual Assembly in Kyiv, Ukraine
20 November 2015*

Your Excellency Ambassador Weil,

Dear participants and guests,

By giving this award the Civil Society Forum wishes to recognise the positive contribution that German Chancellor Angela Merkel has made and continues to make to the European Union's Eastern policy. Her leadership has greatly contributed to this policy which has upheld the European Union's commitment to human rights and to international law.

The Civil Society Forum notes that the success of the Eastern Partnership rests on the continued acceptance by all European states of the post Second World War territorial settlement and the sovereign right of each state to freely choose its alliances and the international agreements they see fit to enter into.

Chancellor Angela Merkel has opposed attempts by some European states to establish „grey areas” which would limit the sovereignty of their neighbours in the interest of their own, spurious, national security. The Civil Society Forum considers that the security of European states can only be protected, in the long term, through respect for international law, an enduring commitment to human rights and a defence of democratic norms at home and abroad. Chancellor Merkel adheres to each of these principles.

Indeed she has withstood the pressure from sectoral interests at home to pay less attention to these values and she has supported a far-sighted foreign policy for the European Union which ultimately seeks to make the Eastern neighbourhood safe for democracy, the rule of law and market reforms.

She has been instrumental in maintaining support among EU member states for punitive foreign policy instruments against countries which have broken these principles, and has opposed those European Union member states which argue for a return to ‘business as usual’ with such countries. She has also not been afraid to criticise fellow leaders of member states who infringe on the democratic values on which the European Union is based and which the Eastern Partnership aims to foster.

Chancellor Merkel has demonstrated leadership in defending western values which ultimately strengthen the European Union while tirelessly seeking peaceful solutions to ongoing conflicts in the region.

The European Union and the Eastern Partnership states are fortunate that at this critical time in their history, Chancellor Angela Merkel is in a position to play a crucial role in shaping European decisions. The Civil Society Forum is certain that this award is well deserved.

Krzysztof Bobiński

Co-Chair of the Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum