

Luxembourg, 18 October 2016

**Address of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum
at the at the Eastern Partnership Formal Ministerial Meeting on Environment and Climate
Change**

Thank you, Mr Chair, ladies and gentlemen

On behalf of the EaP CSF we express our gratitude for opportunity to speak today at the high-level meeting of the EU and EaP Ministers on the Green economy and Environmental Governance. We also see from the Declaration's final text that most of proposals made in our Assessment reports and Statements, as well as during drafting process of the Declaration, were taken into account, thank you.

We would like to express our great support to the initiative of taking environment and climate change agenda to the level of Ministers in a format of regular inclusive process. Such approach, we believe, allows strengthening of the cooperation on planning, monitoring and assessment of environmental performance in the EaP countries to make it more result-oriented. It also provides a structure for more effective involvement of CSOs.

We agree that such cooperation indeed needs reinforcement because the environmental reform in EaP countries requires deep changes in approaches to policy planning, legislation development and adoption, environmental institutions and management transformation, adequate resources and re-newed political commitments in order to place the environment and climate change on the top of countries` priorities.

At the same time, fostering green economy involves a fundamental transition to sustainable production and consumption systems and practices across all economic sectors. To achieve these, EaP countries need to adopt the national strategies and overarching legally binding frameworks such as 10-years SCP Framework and Green Economy policy document (s), drawing upon an effective mix of instruments and approaches.

Integrated environmental governance is an important precondition for transition to green economy and should ensure participation, transparency, accountability and better environmental policy integration. Two Environmental Governance assessments of 6 EaP countries (2012, 2014) conducted by the CSF concluded that a challenge of environmental policy integration remains persistent.

We also conducted 3 European Integration Index assessments in a period of 2012 – 2014 with the chapter of “Environment and Sustainable Development” assessing 6 EaP countries by comparable for all of them indicators.

The assessments identified the alarming situation regarding the state of the environment including inter alia the level of soil erosion, which is very high and exceeds in some EaP

countries the EU-27 average by up to 3 times, while the nature protected areas are too small to effectively protect biodiversity and ecosystem related benefits.

Our general conclusion is that despite countries progress in environmental policy reform, there is also a trend of losing already attained positions, what is a signal of vulnerability of environmental sector. One of main reason for that is a weak institutional capacity and low political weight of environmental protection institutions in the Governments. The institutional strengthening therefore needs to be included into the core of planned actions and become a part of discussions between the EU, EaP national governments and CS on setting and achieving concrete objectives of environmental reforms. The same is true for a whole cycle of policy planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, based on comparable with the EU standards data and indicators.

That is why we call for clear targets for EaP countries on key achievements required for Good Environmental Governance to improve the State of Environment including both, effective environmental policy and institutions. We suggest that such targets could be included into the Action plan for the Declaration and the time-frame also be set.

We are looking forward for the cooperation on the Action plan preparation and its implemetation in partnership. Thank you very much for your attention!

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“Environment, climate change and energy security”*