

**Position Paper of the EaP CSF Azerbaijani National Platform
on Cooperation with the EU and WTO**

The National Platform declares that the Eastern Partnership programme marks an opportunity for Azerbaijan to develop its political relations with European Union as well as to establish a free trade zone and to cancel its visa regime.

The National Platform accepts that by embarking on the Eastern Partnership programme, the European Union aims to integrate the economy, strengthen the state, make the administration more efficient, develop civil society, protect the environment and enhance the border partnership of its member states in line with common European standards.

The National Platform considers that the Association Agreement is a unique document on foreign and security policy, law, freedom, economy and culture that underpins a bilateral and deep partnership within the framework of the Eastern Partnership. Moreover, the Association Agreement confirms the possibility of starting negotiations on the Strategic Partnership Agreement between the government of Azerbaijan and the European Union.

While it is necessary to adjust the trade regulations of the member states to the regulations of partner states, becoming the member of World Trade Organization is crucial. Therefore, we accept this opportunity as an advantageous part of this partnership. We think that it is important to accelerate the process of bilateral and multilateral negotiations in order to quickly adjust Azerbaijan's standards, particularly the country's standards on foreign trade to the EU standards and expedite the process of becoming a member of the World Trade Organization.

We call for a start of the negotiations on signing a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) agreement between Azerbaijan and the EU.

Furthermore, we declare an interest in continuing the partnership with institutions, especially with the European Parliament's Euronest Parliamentary Assembly within the framework of the Eastern Partnership.

We consider it vital that our country proceeds with the partnership around the five Flagship Initiatives established under the Eastern Partnership. We strongly believe in the continuation of initiatives like the integrated programme on border control, support for small and middle-sized enterprises, improving the investment environment in the Eastern Partnership countries and environmental management programmes.

The Working Group “Democracy, Human Rights, Good Governance and Stability” of the National Platform reiterates its interest in partnership on standardisation of election system, free media, gender equality, combating corruption, reforming the civil service, improvement of fair justice system and building confidence and security related issues.

Taking into account its economic integration and convergence with the EU platforms the Azerbaijani National Platform states that it will continue its efforts in developing cooperation on social-economic development issues, unification of market and trade proposals, combating poverty, climate change and environment targets.

Through its “Environment, Climate Change and Energy Security” Working Group the National Platform declares that it will support efforts to adapt the energy policy and legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the EU standards. We hope that Azerbaijan will strengthen its partnership with the EU Energy Union and start negotiations on becoming a member of this organization.

The National Platform also states that through its “Contacts between People” Working Group, it will support cultural exchanges support civil society initiatives such as exchange programmes for schoolchildren and students.

It calls on the government of Azerbaijan to ensure the participation of civil society in the evaluation of the implementation of a Comprehensive Institutional Building programme and to increase the number of Twinning and TAIEX initiatives.

Besides, it calls on the government to foster the development of human capital, the improvement of opportunities and standards for SMEs.

In order to pursue these constructive initiatives within the Civil Society Forum, it declares that, it is ready to pursue bilateral and multilateral partnerships with civil society organizations from the European Neighbourhood and European Union member states.