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THE STATEMENT

Of Armenian National Platform

of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum

December 21, 2013

The Armenian National Platform (ANP) of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) Civil Society Forum (CSF) acknowledges the Vilnius Summit as an important event that enabled to “check the realities,” to clearly and adequately formulate the achievements, failures, ambitions, and the degree of responsibility of every individual partner country and the European Union.

The Summit finally recorded the failure of the last years' policy of the RA, aiming at association with EU. In fact, refusing from European integration and choosing another integration model, Armenia ended up losing the most noticeable opportunity for taking its statehood on a new qualitative level and stepped on a track full of threats to Armenia’s sovereignty and national security

. The possibilities for reforms in democratic institutions, human rights and other spheres became limited as a result the U-turn of the RA authorities.

CSF ANP once again restates that:

- The decision regarding joining the Customs Union and participation in the formation of the Eurasian Union, thus, respectively, the refusal to initial the Association Agreement with EU, was made without proper coordination with the RA state bodies and discussions with the society.
- The almost four-months long appeals by the Armenian National Platform of EaP CSF to the Armenian authorities to include this issue in the RA National Assembly’s agenda hold parliamentary hearings and present to the civil society the grounds for such a decision have been ignored. Not only the ruling coalition, but also the legislative body as a whole, demonstrated no interest or motivation in discussing this matter.
- Investigations of severe violence against civic activists Haykak Arshamyan and Suren Saghatelian after the protest action held on September 5 to oppose joining the Customs Union, as well as that of other similar cases, are being conducted without the application of necessary means to clear the crimes.
- The repressions of the authorities against the participants of the December 2, 2013 action aimed at the protection of the RA’s sovereignty, particularly, the detention of 110 activists and summoning them to police stations, were unprecedented in terms of their disproportionality and violated the citizens’ rights to assembly and freedom of expression.
- The consequences of failed initialing of the Association Agreement and the movement towards the Customs Union – the humiliating gas agreements, the restrictions of pluralism in media

outlets being under the control of the authorities, especially on the air of Public TV, the revision of the status of the RA state language and other similar trends are already troubling,

CSF ANP announces that

- Serzh Sargsyan's assurances regarding the commitment to human rights and the principles of the rule of law, expressed in his EaP Vilnius Summit speech, are not trustworthy in the light of the recent events.
- The conduct of the RA leadership in the recent months in no way complies with the acknowledgement of the importance of strengthening the civil society, as expressed in the joint statement by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton and the RA Minister of Foreign Affairs Edward Nalbandian.
- There has been no confirmation of the agreement of the RA authorities to the announcement made by the EU Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighborhood Policy Stefan Fule after the 14th session of Armenia-EU cooperation commission, held in Brussels on December 9, 2013, on the prioritization of the role of the CSF ANP in the reforms monitoring process.

Taking into consideration all the facts mentioned above, as well as the existence of new approaches regarding the format and content of further relations between EU and Armenia within the EaP framework, the Armenian National platform demands from the leadership of the Republic of Armenia to participate in the upcoming meeting of EaP CSF ANP, which will take place before January 2014, during which the RA Government will be expected:

- To present concrete grounds and substantiation for substituting the European integration by the Eurasian one, for the constitutionality of the decision to join the Customs Union, as well as to provide guarantees for the preservation of Armenia's sovereignty in the conditions of the current foreign policy trends of RA.
- To discuss and specify the mechanisms of cooperation between the RA Government and the CSF Armenian National Platform, including the idea of "structured dialogue" and the control mechanisms over budget support provided to Armenia by the EU.

ANP will consider the disregard of the above-enumerated demands as RA authorities' final rejection of any constructive dialogue with the civil society, and therefore will relate the possibility to advance reforms in the country with a change of government through snap elections of President and National Assembly of the RA.

Under circumstances requiring the clarification of a possible new format of EU-Armenia relations, we call upon the EU bodies:

- To learn from experience and to build relations with Armenia based on the unqualified fulfillment of commitments, exclusion of the double standard approaches and strict application of the "more for more" principle,
- To be consistent in the assessment of reform efficiency and, in particular, the real involvement of civil society in monitoring the utilization of EU support.

The Armenian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum reconfirms its commitment to the vision of Armenia's European integration and determination to act as an opponent to the RA authorities on joining the Customs Union. CSF ANP is ready and willing to invest its potential to return Armenia to the agenda of Association Agreement with EU. For that purpose ANP will conduct a large-scale awareness raising campaign and is ready to cooperate with all the political and civic bodies that share the approaches and goals of the Platform.