



EASTERN PARTNERSHIP
Civil Society Forum



RESOLUTION of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum on supporting integration of EaP countries into European Union rather than Customs Union

The Civil Society Forum of the Eastern Partnership (EaP CSF) welcomes the historic prospect of Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius 2013 for Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova to sign or initial Association Agreements with the European Union.

Meantime we also express our solidarity and share the disagreement and frustration expressed in the statement of the Armenian National Platform of the CSF on September 17th regarding the intention of the RA authorities to join the Customs Union and participate in formation of the Eurasian Union that led to the failure of the initialling of the Association Agreement between EU and Armenia.

In general, we are deeply concerned with the constant political and economic pressure exercised by Russian Federation towards the Eastern Partnership countries, including the intensification of so called “borderisation process” in conflict regions of Georgia and economic warfare conducted by Russia towards Ukraine and Moldova.

The EaP-CSF would like to underline that what is at stake for the EaP countries is not a just signing or ratifying the AA/DCFTAs with EU, but it's about the establishment of the democratic institutions, strengthening of the rule of law and human rights protection, reducing corruption and eradicating poverty, raising labour, environmental and social standards, which would lead to prosperity and the welfare of EaP countries, as well as increased security and peaceful resolution of conflicts.

In general, the whole idea of the Customs Union, represents a political agenda, including the creation of common military and policy forces for internal conflict resolution, a defence center in Moscow, a common Parliament and Executive Bodies, a common foreign policy with Russian Federation, a common educational and banking system, alongside with common Customs and Economic space.

However, in opposition to EU integration process the Russian Federation Customs Union idea is not based on democratic values or conditionalities and therefore cannot be considered as an incentive to domestic reforms.

In line with Commissioner Stefan Füle's statement we want to stress that "any threats from Russia linked to the possible signing of agreements with the European Union are unacceptable" and Russia should respect sovereign decisions of EaP countries.

We call on:

- The EU to reaffirm its strong political and financial support to Eastern Partnership Countries after the Vilnius Summit for implementation of democratic reforms in line with EU integration process ;
- Ensuring the speeding up the signature / ratification of AA/DCFTAs by EU and MS for Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia in order to start implementation of Association Agenda.
- Strengthen the visa dialogue with selected EaP countries
- The EU and its institutions to counter Russian pressure regarding the EaP countries and come forward with concrete, effective measures to support and protect the EaP partner countries.