



EASTERN PARTNERSHIP Civil Society Forum

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Civil Society Forum of the Eastern Partnership appeal on Ukraine: the Association Agreement between the EU and Ukraine should be initialled

The Eastern Partnership initiative was launched to assist the eastern neighbours of the European Union in democratic reforms, institutional changes, legal approximation with EU standards, and the establishment of a free trade area with the EU.

The Association Agreements are supposed to become the key instruments of achieving the above objectives. They are intended to transform the domestic administration and legislation of Eastern Partnership countries and move them closer to the EU.

Ukraine has achieved noticeable progress in negotiating the Association Agreement. Complicated negotiations that have lasted for almost five years have brought the EU and Ukraine to the stage when it has become possible to finalise and initial the Association Agreement. The Association

Agreement with Ukraine can serve as a model for the Association Agreement with other Eastern Partnership countries.

Given what has been achieved so far, and given the importance of the Association Agreement with Ukraine for the success of the entire Eastern Partnership initiative, we call on the EU and Ukraine to initial the Agreement in the near future.

The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum also expresses its concern over the growing democratic deficit in Ukraine (the criminal prosecution of political and civil society leaders). The Civil Society Forum stresses the need for the Government of Ukraine and the President of Ukraine to respect democratic values in order to make it possible to continue integration with the European Union.

The Civil Society Forum calls upon the EU and Ukraine to conclude negotiations on the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, to initial the Agreement, and make the text available to the public. Its publication would strengthen the leverage of civil society to deliver key messages to society in Ukraine and potentially other Eastern Partnership countries on how the Agreement can become an instrument of transformation and reform in Ukraine.

The Civil Society Forum also recommends that the Agreement should be signed and ratified by the EU and the Member States of the EU only on the condition that further progress is achieved in Ukraine on democratic reforms and the rule of law.

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