



Kyiv, September 12, 2011

H.E. Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council

H.E. José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission

H.E. Jerzy Buzek, President of the European Parliament

H.E. Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy,

H.E. Radosław Sikorski, President of the EU Council, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Poland

**Open letter of Ukrainian National Platform
of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum
and leading civil society networks
concerning the Association Agreement initialing**

Your Excellencies,

On behalf of the Ukrainian civil society we would like to address the European Union (EU) leaders with this appeal on the importance of timely finalization of the negotiations on the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU.

Ukrainian society, considering itself as an integral part of the European society, anticipates signing of the Association Agreement and its entering into force as a milestone on the way of further strengthening of the links between Ukraine and the EU.

We do share the EU's concerns about the lack of rule of law in Ukraine. The Ukrainian civil society has constantly expressed the necessity of respecting human rights standards and European values in our country, in particular, the respect for freedom of speech and the right to fair trial.

The Ukrainian civil society has been focused on promoting democracy and human rights standards in Ukraine since its independence. Obviously, its common efforts with the EU's support are becoming crucial for further securing these standards, especially on the eve of the parliamentary elections.

In our opinion, the opportunity of finalizing the negotiations and signing the Association Agreement this year will safeguard further democratic and economic reforms urgently needed for Ukrainian citizens.

Moreover, the Agreement will offer additional leverage for Ukrainian civil society to call the government of Ukraine to accountability and responsible decision making. Given the potential transformative effect of the Agreement on Ukraine, it is primarily the Ukrainian society, not so much the authorities, which needs this Agreement. Alternative scenarios presuming suspension of negotiations will undermine further democratic developments in Ukraine.

Leading networks of Ukrainian civil society believe that the European Union will adhere to intentions to initial the EU — Ukraine Association Agreement by the end of 2011.

We also recommend that a permanent joint monitoring and evaluation mechanism on the Association Agreement's implementation shall be established within the framework of the Agreement and express our readiness to cooperate with the EU institutions in developing and functioning of such mechanism.

Truly,

Ihor Kohut, Ukrainian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum

Oleh Rybachuk, Civic Expert Council within the Ukrainian Part of the EU-Ukraine Cooperation Committee

Volodymyr Lupatsiy, National Convention on the EU in Ukraine

Kateryna Sidash, Reforms Support Network