

Catherine Ashton,
Vice-President, European Commission,
and High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, European Council
Štefan Füle, European Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy
Martin Schulz, President, European Parliament
Ministers of Foreign Affairs, EU member states

20 February 2014

Statement of Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum on political repression in Ukraine

**EU cannot delay any longer an intensive, long-term strategic
commitment to Ukraine and immediate despatch of special EU envoy**

**EU should use targeted sanctions, including freezing bank accounts,
against individuals responsible for violence against protesters**

Dear High Representative, Dear Commissioner, Dear President of the European Parliament, Dear Ministers,

The Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum calls upon the European Union to send a permanent special envoy to Ukraine, backed up by experienced negotiators from member states, to work towards peaceful solution of the current crisis, and support a sustained EU engagement working for closer EU integration with Ukraine, with the goal of a perspective of EU membership of Ukraine. We appreciate the sincere engagement of leading EU representatives, including the visits of the High Representative and the Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy. These are not sufficient to address the current political crisis in Ukraine.

A permanent, high-level special envoy is required with immediate effect, with a strong mandate to negotiate with all sides in the conflict. The envoy should be backed up by experienced diplomats and negotiators seconded from EU member states. The depth and geopolitical importance of the current crisis in Ukraine cannot be addressed without sustained EU engagement at this level and intensity.

In the light of the tragic events of this week, including many deaths of Maidan protesters, the Forum calls upon the EU and EU member states to impose a travel ban on the state officials responsible for attacks on protesters, and for the freezing of their EU-based financial assets. These sanctions must be applied also to President Viktor Yanukovich, who is directly responsible for these actions.

We reiterate the call of the Civil Society Forum on 20 January 2014 that the EU should apply equivalent sanctions to politicians in all Eastern Partnership countries who infringe human rights and freedoms, and must back this up by insisting that all partner countries sign a Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms – enshrining promotion and protection of human rights, freedoms of association, assembly, and speech, independent media, and the right to participate in free and fair elections. Any infringement of the Charter should trigger clearly delineated responses from the EU, including a freeze of financial assistance and other sanctions.

It is imperative now that the EU demonstrably supports civil society actors and citizens wishing to express their opinions freely in the Eastern Partner countries. EU support should go beyond financial aid to civil society, and extend to ensuring that all EU representatives travelling to Ukraine and other partner countries meet with representatives of civil society, and vocally support their calls for freedom of association and the removal of restrictions on civil society.

Yours faithfully,

Steering Committee
Civil Society Forum of the Eastern Partnership