



**Armenian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum
Statement
On the Initiative of Constitutional Changes**

September 17, 2015

Armenian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum¹, not excluding that the existing constitution contains provisions which require certain amendments, expresses its deep concern regarding the process of revision of the constitution initiated by the incumbent government. We consider that the initiative of constitutional revision and the referendum called in this regard are untimely and do not derive from the interests of the state and the society, instead serve the interest of the existing political leadership.

Revision of the constitutional is being held in a time when:

- There is no constitutional crisis and the obstacle to urgent reform in the country is not the existing main law , but the absence of political will to ensure constitutional order and democratic development of the country;
- There is no public demand for such changes, which will be reflected in low turnout and consequently high risks of large-scale fraud;
- There is no broad political consensus around this initiative, which is an essential precondition for constitutional referendum in civilized international practice. Serious and well-founded reservations of civil and political structures regarding this initiative limit the opportunity of wide, open and constructive discussion and improvement of this endeavor;
- Based on the above said, at the same time taking into account the existing gaps in the relevant legislation and vicious practice of national elections in the country , it is hard to expect public confidence in the voting results. In particular, despite the amendments to the Law on Referendum of June 10 of the current year, the regulations regarding information campaigns covering different positions remain unclear;
- Finally, the absence of clear and adequate strategy of the incumbent government concerning most serious internal and external challenges that Armenia is currently

¹ The Platform combines about 200 civil society organizations of Armenia.

facing, such as the establishment of the rule of law, eradication of corruption and ineffective governance, adequate responses to geopolitical shocks, etc., should not be disguised under the illusion of constitutional amendments, which is perceived merely as pursuit of political ambitions.

We are convinced that constitutional reform should be clearly separated from the current political ambiance, which is impossible in the context of present development.

Therefore, we urge the RA authorities to postpone the referendum on constitutional changes until after the forthcoming national elections, within a reasonable timeframe. Herein we also call all political forces to agree to engage in further discussions on the constitutional amendments in the future, including presenting their own positions on this issue in their pre-election party platforms.

Also, as a guarantee/precondition to public trust we demand the RA authorities to ensure free and fair administration of the upcoming elections.

EaP CSF Armenian National Platform
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Yerevan