

Donald Tusk, President, European Council

Jean-Claude Juncker, President, European Commission

Federica Mogherini, Vice-President of the European Commission, High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

Johannes Hahn, European Commissioner for Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations

Martin Schulz, President, European Parliament

Heads of State and Government, EU Member States

Giorgi Margvelashvili, President, Georgia

Davit Usupashvili, Speaker, Parliament, Georgia

Nicolae Timofti, President, Republic of Moldova

Andrian Candu, Speaker, Parliament, Republic of Moldova

Petro Poroshenko, President, Ukraine

Volodymyr Groysman, Speaker, Verkhovna Rada, Ukraine

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Joint Statement of the National Platforms on Recognizing the European Perspective for the Eastern Partnership States

We, the member organizations of the Armenian, Belarusian, Georgian, Moldovan and Ukrainian National Platforms of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, are looking forward to the upcoming Riga Summit with special interest.

The Summit will take place in the wake of Russian aggression, i.e. armed activities, occupation and annexation of territories, and the unprecedented economic pressure on the Eastern Partnership countries, carried out by the Russian Federation in response to the European choice declared by the Ukrainian, Georgian, and Moldovan people. In light of these challenges, the Riga Summit should answer the question on how the United Europe sees the future of the rest of the continent.

Since gaining independence, the Eastern Partnership countries have gone a long, complicated and challenging way. The EU Association Agreements signed by Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine are the latest achievements on this way. These Agreements including arrangements on a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area represent the plan of modernizing these countries according to the European model and practically bringing them closer to their ultimate goal of becoming members of the European Union.

We do realize that there is a long and challenging way ahead that implies carrying out important reforms in all spheres of public life. We emphasize that the people of Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova have made a firm choice - in some cases, through national referendums - to become

EU members. We also believe that the European choice has no other reasonable alternative for the countries, which have not signed the EU Association Agreements yet, i.e. Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Belarus.

The latest events in Ukraine, and previously, the Russian aggression towards Georgia in August 2008 prove that as long as these countries declared European perspective they became hostages of the situation, built by the territorial problems and frozen conflicts resulted from the external aggression.

We believe current situation stimulates the Russian aggression further. The Russian Federation takes advantage of the mentioned status quo and by launching an aggressive informational campaign attempts to strengthen the belief among the populations of the Eastern Partnership countries that they have no real chances of joining the EU, which makes the integration with Russia the only realistic option left.

A number of the EU official documents, including the joint declarations of the Eastern Partnership Summits, as well as the EU Association Agreements signed by the three countries, recognize the historical ties and common values shared between our countries and the EU member states. Certain provisions of these Agreements welcome European aspirations of these countries and praise their European choice. Several resolutions of the European Parliament directly recognize the European perspective for the Eastern Partnership states and the right of these countries to apply for the EU membership, under Article 49 of the Treaty on the European Union.

We underline that we expect from the participants of the Riga Summit a clear message confirming that notwithstanding Russia's aggression against a number of the Eastern Partnership countries, our European perspective is universally recognized and as European states, we cannot be deprived of the right to become the full-fledged members of the United Europe.

We urge the European Union and its Member States to explicitly recognize the European perspective for Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine at the Riga Eastern Partnership Summit!

We call on Georgian, Moldovan and Ukrainian parliaments and governments to support this appeal by respective declarations and diplomatic actions.

***Armenian, Belarusian, Georgian, Moldovan and Ukrainian National Platforms
of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum
(signed by more than 400 civil society organisations)***