

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

Serzh Sargsyan, President, the Republic of Armenia

24 June 2015

**Statement of the EaP CSF Steering Committee
on the 23 June attacks of the Armenian authorities against peaceful protesters**

The Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum strongly condemns the illegal actions of the Armenian authorities and demands the immediate cessation of all persecution of citizens of Armenia who are acting within the requirements of the Armenian Constitution and legislation.

On 23 June at approximately 5:15 am, Armenian riot police used force against peaceful protesters who were seeking the withdrawal of a recent decision by the Armenian authorities to raise electricity prices. Around 240 protesters, journalists and human rights defenders were detained by the police with little or no justification. Serious and flagrant violations of civil liberties and regulations were noted during the detention. People were kept at police stations for more than 12 hours, and many are still in custody. A number of reporters' cameras were broken and/or seized during the police action. According to the Armenian media; about 25 protesters are currently hospitalised, with five in serious condition being placed in the intensive care departments of local hospitals.

The protest came as a result of a decision of the State Committee of Public Services to increase the price of electricity based on the request of the Armenian Electric Networks CJSC. The review of the documents presented by the company identified a number of serious violations and unacceptable demands, including the inclusion of expenditures on luxury cars and houses in the count of the electricity rates. Nevertheless, the State Committee of Public Services decided to satisfy the request of Armenian Electric Networks CJSC. This decision has triggered serious discontent in the Armenian society and most active part of the society consolidated in a movement which aims to get the decision on the price rise withdrawn.

The act of aggression against peaceful protesters by the Armenian authorities shows a complete inability or unwillingness of the authorities to interact with the society, as well as to protect the rights of Armenian citizens. The pattern of brutal attacks on protesters contradicts all the commitments that the Armenian authorities have undertaken in the framework of its relations with the European Union.

The Steering Committee demands the Armenian authorities to call all the organizers and implementers of these illegal acts to responsibility. The Steering Committee urges the European Union to treat the unacceptable behaviour of the Armenian authorities as a significant obstacle for effective dialogue on the cooperation between Armenia and the EU.