

**Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Georgian National Platform
Statement on Recognizing the European Perspective for the Eastern Partnership States**

We, the member organizations of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Georgian National Platform, are looking forward to the upcoming Riga Summit with special interest.

The Summit, which will take place in the wake of Russian aggression, armed activities, occupation and annexation of territories in response to the European choice declared by the Ukrainian people, should answer the question how unified Europe sees the future of the rest of the Europe.

Since gaining independence, the Eastern Partnership countries have travelled on a long, complicated and challenging path. The last achievement in this regard had been Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine signing the Association Agreement with the EU. These Agreements, including arrangements on a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area, represent a plan to modernize these signatory countries according to the European model thus bringing them closer to their ultimate aim of becoming European Union member states.

We realize that there is still a long and challenging road ahead that implies carrying out important reforms in all spheres of public life. We would like to underline that the people in our countries, and in some cases through national referenda, made a firm choice to become members of the EU – a choice, which does not have any reasonable alternative.

The latest events in Ukraine, and before that the Russian aggression towards Georgia in August 2008 create an impression that these countries are characterized by territorial problems and frozen conflicts as a result of external aggression – many believe that such a situation serves to only stimulate Russian aggression further.

The Russian Federation takes advantage from the aforementioned status quo and by launching an aggressive informational campaign tries to strengthen the belief among the populations of Eastern Partnership countries that we do not have any chance of joining the EU, which makes integration with Russia the only realistic option left.

A number of official documents adopted by different European institutions as well as the Association Agreements signed by all three states recognize the historical ties and common values shared between our countries and the EU member states. Certain provisions of these Agreements welcome the European aspirations of these countries and praise their European choice. The resolutions adopted by the European Parliament directly recognize the European perspective and the right of these countries to apply to become members of the EU under Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union.

We would like to underline that we, the member organizations of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Georgian National Platform, are waiting for a clear message from the members of the Riga Summit confirming that notwithstanding aggression waged against our countries, our European perspective is universally recognized and as European states, we cannot be deprived the right to become fully-fledged members of a unified Europe.

We call on the European Union and its member states to explicitly recognize at the Riga Summit the European perspective for Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

We also call upon our parliament and government to support this appeal by issuing respective declarations and diplomatic action.