



STATEMENT
OF STEERING COMMITTEE OF EASTERN PARTNERSHIP CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM
REGARDING INTENTION OF ARMENIAN AUTHORITIES TO JOIN CUSTOMS UNION

The Steering Committee of the Civil Society Forum of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) expresses its deep regret with the statement of the President of the Republic of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan on Armenia's intention to join the Customs Union. The consequence of this step would be a setback in the level and effectiveness of Armenia's engagement in the Eastern Partnership, and in particular would negatively affect the perspective of the EU-Armenia Association Agreement.

- We respect Armenia's sovereign right to choose the direction and model of integration with other countries, and the unconditioned priority it has to give to national interests in making its choices. At the same time we are concerned that the unexpected statement of the President Sargsyan came without any proper process of political debate and discussion based on solid arguments;
- We also note the tremendous efforts and resources which were invested by the European Union and Armenia in the course of negotiations on the Association Agreement which have been successfully finalised. Thus we can only be dismayed at the lost opportunities for Armenia which President Sargsyan's statement represents.
- We call on the Armenian government to clarify its position to the European partners and, above all, to Armenian society.
- We express the hope that Armenia will stay on the track of European integration which was originally announced as priority for its external politics; we call on the EU institutions to continue the search for closer integration between the European Union and Armenia.
- We recognise the efforts the Armenian National Platform (ANP) has made in promoting the reform process in the country as formulated in the EaP Road Map, in monitoring developments and raising public awareness on the Eastern Partnership initiative;
- We urge the Armenian government to increase the level of its dialogue with the civil society and the ANP, in particular, in the agenda of EU-Armenia relations, and trust that the decision to join the Customs Union will not negatively affect this dialogue.