



EASTERN PARTNERSHIP  
**Civil Society Forum**

**Statement on the situation with press freedom in Georgia**

We, the members of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Media subgroup, express our concern regarding the recent developments infringing the press freedoms in Georgia.

In these days, some of the newspaper kiosks have been forced to cease their activities, under the pretext of holding a tender. These actions of Tbilisi local government have already negatively affected the outreach of Georgian print media outlets and created serious financial problems for the magazines and newspapers.

Georgian society considers that the above developments are directed at the demolition of the existing distribution system of print media and thereby, pose a threat to media freedom.

We, the undersigned, call for and urge Tbilisi local government to stop the measures undertaken against the print media in Georgia. There should remain 'islands of freedom' where citizens may freely access information and independent analysis about ongoing events.

As mentioned above, the decision of the Tbilisi government will further deteriorate the rather challenging state of the print media in Georgia. We believe that the Georgian government has the positive obligation to conduct all possible actions to ensure the protection of freedom of speech and expression and by that, pursue fundamental European values. We call on Georgian government to support free media and withdraw all the direct and indirect actions hindering the distribution of the press.

*8<sup>th</sup> December, 2011*