



EASTERN PARTNERSHIP Civil Society Forum

Conference of the Belarusian National Platform
of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum

“Civil society of Belarus: on the eve of the third annual meeting of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum”

Minsk, 29th October 2011

Resolution

We, the participants of the Conference of the Belarusian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, note the obvious achievements made by the Belarusian civil society within the recent years and declare the need for a further consolidation and coordination of the activities conducted by our organisations within the Belarusian National Platform framework. Also, we:

- State that the EU Eastern Partnership initiative could potentially become an important tool for conducting key reforms in the spheres of state administration, economy, environment, culture, and contacts-between-people in the direction of a further drawing nearer to the modern European standards and rules.
- Share the goals and objectives of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum and express our hope for a further growth of its role and significance within the EU Eastern Partnership initiative.
- Support the official position of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum addressed to the Eastern Partnership summit (Warsaw, 29 September 2011), in particular, we welcome the approach of the European Commission and the EU, which recognise the Belarusian civil society organisations and the Belarusian National Platform set up by them as an inalienable part of the Forum, despite their de facto suspended interaction with the Belarusian government.
- Have to acknowledge with regret the Belarusian state’s unreadiness to deepen its interactions within the framework of the Eastern Partnership, and, in particular, its unwillingness to stand up to the high EU standards in the area of democratic development and human rights guarantees. Although the Belarusian authorities are ignoring their participation in a variety of the Eastern Partnership dimensions and structural components (e.g., the discussion of the issues related to the judicial reform within the Council of Europe Eastern Partnership Facility et al), we declare the necessity of an obligatory inclusion of Belarus in these processes, as well as the readiness on behalf of the civil society to take part in them as experts and observers.
- Appeal again to the Government and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus to revise their policies towards the Eastern Partnership, and to expand and intensify the country’s involvement in all the dimensions declared within its framework.

- Fully share the Declaration by the EU state and government leaders and by the EU member countries on the situation in Belarus approved at the latest Eastern Partnership summit. We back the appeal contained in this Declaration for an immediate release and rehabilitation of all the political prisoners, stopping repressions against the civil society and independent media, and starting a political dialogue with the democratic community. We stress that it is intolerable to adopt repressive laws, which, to a significant and critical degree, limit the constitutional rights and freedoms of the citizens of the Republic of Belarus, and demand the removal of all the existing illegitimate limitations imposed on the civil society activities carried out in the country.
- Believe it is of dire necessity to develop promptly a step-by-step plan (road map) to normalise the relationship between the Republic of Belarus and the European Union for our country's full-fledged participation in the EU Eastern Partnership initiative. The Belarusian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum declares its readiness to provide a ground for the development of this plan, as well as to act as a mechanism for its presentation and promotion both for the European Union and the Belarusian authorities.
- Appeal to all the responsible political and social forces in Belarus for participation in elaborating this plan to reflect the consolidated approaches and to form a real basis for joint and consistent efforts related to ensuring a constructive Belarusian-European dialogue and resuming a full-scale functioning of the EU Eastern Partnership initiative.