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**European Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy**  
**Martin Schulz, President, European Parliament**  
**Ministers of Foreign Affairs, EU member states**

Brussels, 17 December 2013

**Statement of Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum on European integration aspirations in Ukraine**

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## **Solution of political crisis in Ukraine requires inclusive talks with opposition and civil society to shape credible government commitment towards signature of Association Agreement with EU**

**Dear High Representative, Dear Commissioner, Dear Ministers,**

Throughout 2013, the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum has repeatedly expressed its support for the signing of the Association Agreement between the European Union and Ukraine, as a historic document that should guarantee the future success of the Eastern Partnership initiative, and confirm the European future of Ukraine. Civil Society has strived to act as a full participant in the dialogue between Ukraine and the EU, calling upon the parties to express goodwill in fulfilling requirements and reaching agreements, to overcome political ambitions, and to confront interference by Russia in EU-Ukraine bilateral relations.

The refusal of the Ukrainian Government to continue preparations for the signature of the Association Agreement led hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians to feel betrayed and to gather in the streets of Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities, demanding that President Viktor Yanukovich sign the Agreement at the Eastern Partnership summit in Vilnius on 28-29 November 2013. The signing of the Agreement was disrupted owing to the lack of political will on the part of the President and the Government of Ukraine, and fierce pressure from the side of pro-Russian political interest groups.

The continuing disregard by the authorities of the interests of the citizens of Ukraine, along with the bloody violence committed by Ministry of Interior Special Forces against peaceful participants in the Euromaidan rallies on the nights of 30 November and 1 December 2013 have placed on the agenda the issue of the legitimacy of power and its responsibility for unlawful actions. The right to an European future and peaceful resolution of the political chaos in the country have united all concerned Ukrainians. Euromaidan has already become the largest and longest-lasting action in support of European integration since 1989. People's Assemblies (*Narodne Viche*), which have been gathering hundreds of thousands of ordinary Ukrainians in the heart of Kyiv every Sunday, are a reminder to the authorities that sovereignty belongs to the people of Ukraine, who are the only source of legitimate power in Ukraine, and hold the key to a solution to the political crisis.

Unfortunately, the recurrent forceful dispersal of protesters, which took place on 11 December 2013 have demonstrated that the Government of Ukraine understands neither the need to find a political compromise nor the likely consequences of escalation of the political crisis

With a view to preventing a further deepening of the crisis in Ukraine, the Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum calls on the Ukrainian authorities:

- to organise as quickly and as publicly as possible a roundtable with the participation of real and authorised representatives of the protesters, leaders of the opposition, and recognised representatives of

civil society to develop an action plan for a compromise solution to meet the concerns of the Euromaidan participants;

- to stop criminal prosecution or other persecution of civil activists and protesters, who were arrested at protest rallies on 1 December 2013;
- to comply with obligations not to use force against peaceful demonstrators;
- to punish all officials responsible for the shedding of blood on 30 November 2013, not only those who carried out the violence;
- to take practical steps to sign the Association Agreement, in line with the calls from Ukrainian society, instead of the imitation of an active negotiating process without concrete results.

We are deeply convinced that the EU in its turn can help to reduce political tensions in Ukraine by:

- the presence of political and public figures from the EU in Ukraine until the end of the active phase of the conflict, and participation as observers or mediators in the negotiations process between the authorities and the representatives of Euromaidan;
- dissuading the Russian Federation from taking actions that would lead to the enforced inclusion of Ukraine into its integration projects;
- consideration in line with the European Parliament resolution of 12 December 2013 of action to reach a swift agreement on a visa-free regime with Ukraine, and to start by introducing a visa-free regime for the short-term visits of citizens of Ukraine to the EU member-states in the Schengen zone<sup>1</sup>;
- the imposition of EU sanctions on particular high-ranking officials in Ukraine unless the Ukrainian Government fulfils the requirements not to use force towards participants engaged in peaceful demonstrations, and unless those responsible for forceful actions are duly punished.

Yours faithfully,

Steering Committee  
Civil Society Forum of the Eastern Partnership

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<sup>1</sup> European Parliament resolution of 12 December 2013 on the outcome of the Vilnius Summit and the future of the Eastern Partnership, in particular as regards Ukraine (2013/2983(RSP)) “11. Calls for the EU institutions and the Member States to commit to a broad opening towards Ukrainian society, in particular through a swift agreement on a visa-free regime, strengthened research cooperation, expanded youth exchanges and increased availability of scholarships; considers that further efforts should be made to include Ukraine fully in the EU’s internal energy market.”

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P7-TA-2013-0595&format=XML&language=EN>