



EU INTEGRATION & COMMON SECURITY: MAKING IT HAPPEN
The 6th annual meeting of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum
20-21 November 2014, Batumi, Georgia

Statement issued by delegates participating in Working Group 5 – Social & Labour Policies and Social Dialogue

On the occasion of the 6th annual Assembly of the EaP Civil Society Forum,

Batumi, 20th November 2014

The Delegates:

1. Support the European Union's Eastern Partnership policy, which was initiated in 2009.
2. Recognize that the countries that have chosen to engage in a closer cooperation with the EU still have to face challenges to go towards stability and prosperity.
3. Encourage the authorities of the countries that have chosen a different path to promote and maintain a strong level of engagement and cooperation with the EU and to work towards achieving the standards and values promoted within the EaP.
4. Deplore the dramatic developments in Ukraine and call on the international community to step up its efforts with a view to finding a peaceful and sustainable solution. Welcome the signature and provisional implementation of the EU Association Agreements (AA) with Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia.
5. Stress that the harmonization of legislation and structural reforms will be needed to implement successfully the AA and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) in these countries.
6. Insist in particular on the necessity to improve the enforcement of all fundamental rights and freedoms, as guaranteed by the Core Conventions of the International Labour Organization, the Charter of Fundamental rights of the European Union and the European Social Charter.
7. Emphasize that the Eastern Partnership policy should be articulated with the main principles of the European social model, such as: sustainable development, full employment, decent jobs and quality of public services, social protection schemes, the protection of vulnerable groups, involvement of social partners in all levels, respect of fundamental social rights for all.

8. Insist in particular that all necessary reforms should be implemented with due respect to the economic and social rights of people.

9. Call on social partnership, collective bargaining and information and consultations with independent and social partners to be respected and further developed.

10. Stress that the establishment of bilateral Civil Society Platforms foreseen in the AAs should serve, among other things, as impetus to promoting the development of social dialogue in these countries.

11. Call on the EaP sides of the future bilateral Civil Society Platforms to strive to achieve a broad-based civil society representation that must include social partners among its members.

12. Insist that the mindset of viewing trade unions and employers' associations as remnants of the undemocratic past should be challenged by building the independent capacities of these organizations and conveying the spirit of genuine social dialogue not only to the parties involved, but also to the public in general.

13. Stress that aiming at developing the capacities of the social partners will be key for a successful implementation of the AA and for the approximation of the Eastern Neighbours' countries with the European Social Model, based on structured industrial relations relying on strong, independent and democratic social partners.