

September 30, 2013

STATEMENT

Eastern Partnership Civil Society Georgian National Platform welcomes the historic prospects of that Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius 2013 for Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova to sign or initialling the Association Agreements with the European Union.

We would like to also welcome the possibilities for rapid signature for Association Agreement between Georgia and EU, as it was recently stressed by high level Georgian and EU officials, that would ensure the broader and deep relations with EU, that would go well beyond merely economic benefits towards establishment of stable and democratic political system and institutions, support development of civil society.

However, we are clearly concerned with the constant political and economic pressure exercised by Russian Federation towards Eastern Partnership countries that becomes vivid with sudden decision by Serj Sargasyan, President of the Republic of Armenia, to join the Russian sponsored Customs Union¹, as well as ongoing statements that Eurasian Economic Union project and DCFTA negotiated with EaP countries is compatible with each other. The increased pressure of Russian Federation military in South Ossetia, through constructing insurmountable barriers dividing families and private and communal properties, impeding freedom of movement has been intensified since May 2013, is one of the most example of Russia's pressure on Georgia.

In line with Commissioner Fule statement we want to stress that “any threats from Russia linked to the possible signing of agreements with the European Union are unacceptable” and Russia should respect sovereign decisions of EaP countries.

From Georgian perspective it's not only about AA/DCFTA but about Russia's pressure to oppose Georgia's future integration with EU, strengthen the rule of law and human rights protection, reduce corruption, establish the democratic institution and ensure peaceful resolution of Georgia's ethnic conflicts. Therefore there is much more than just signing AA and free trade agreements, its about the long term security of Georgia, that wants to escape from its Soviet past and earned the right to a happy European future.

From another side, the Russian Federation that presses the EaP countries to join the

¹ The EU parliament resolution on on the pressure exerted by Russia on Eastern Partnership countries (in the context of the upcoming Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius) (2013/2826(RSP)) – September 12, 2013

Customs Union that is not based on democratic values or conditionalities and therefore cannot be considered as an incentive to domestic reforms.

Georgian National Platform expresses its solidarity to the Armenian National Platform and hopes that with joint efforts we will ensure the European perspectives to the Republic of Armenia.

Furthermore, we call:

- The European Union to reaffirm its strong support for the initialling Georgia EU Association Agreements at the Vilnius Summit
- The government of Georgia to openly state and intensify the work with EU and MS in order to stimulate the AA/DCFTA signature process by the end of the spring 2014 and later on its rapid ratification.
- The European Commission, European Parliament and MS to exercise all existing tools in order to ensure entering into force the EU Georgia Association Agreement as soon as possible in order to start implementation of the agreement; to support acceleration of a visa liberalization process
- The European Union to apply their leverages towards Russia's pressure regarding the EaP countries and come forward with concrete, effective measures to support the EaP partner countries and their populations.

The signatory organizations:

1. Association "Green Alternative"
2. Open Society Georgia Foundation
3. Liberal Academy Tbilisi
4. Georgia Press Association
5. Transparency International Georgia
6. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
7. Public Advocacy
8. Healthy World
9. Studio "Re"
10. Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies
11. Institute for Development of Freedom of Information
12. International Centre of Geopolitical research
13. IDP Association "Consent"
14. Caucasus Environmental NGO network
15. Youth Alternative
16. Free University Georgia
17. Youth Association "Droni"
18. Energy Efficiency Centre Georgia
19. Energy Efficiency Foundation
20. The Centre for Strategic Research and Development of Georgia
21. European Integration Forum
22. Georgia International Development Agency
23. Foundation "Caucasus Environment"
24. Association DEA for Disabled Women and Mothers of Disabled Children
25. Association "Woman and Business"

26. Association European Studies for the Innovative Development of Georgia
27. Georgian Association of Regional Broadcasters
28. World Experience for Georgia
29. The Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development
30. -Caucasus Institute for Economic and Social Research
31. International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy
32. Georgian Young Lawyers' Association
33. Foundation "Multi- Ethnic Resource Centre on Civic Education Development"
34. Repatriates' Union
35. International Press Institute
36. Women Enterprise Fund
37. Georgian Civil Development Association
38. Association for Bio-Farming "Elkana"
39. Association "Atinati"
40. Fund "Sukhumi"
41. The Greens Movement of Georgia
42. Samtskhe-Javakheti Regional Association "Toleranti"
43. Association for the Farmers' Rights Defence
44. Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Georgian National Committee
45. Teachers' Union "Education and Universe"
46. Student Youth Council
47. Peaceful and Business Caucasus
48. International Organization of Human Rights protection and Prisoners social welfare
49. "School-Family-Society" Association
50. Caucasian House Georgia
51. International Business and Economic Development Centre
52. International Society "Caucasian Mosaic"
53. United Public Movement "Multinational Georgia"
54. Georgian Trade Union Confederation
55. Green Wave