



**ADDRESS OF THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM
AT THE
4TH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE EURONEST PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY IN YEREVAN**

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished guests

It is a great honor to me to address the 4th ordinary session of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly on behalf of the EaP CSF. The inter-parliamentary forum with the Eastern Neighbours initiated by the European Parliament is a valuable platform for discussing important issues related to culture, education, energy, civil society and other spheres where Eastern Partnership members are actively cooperating.

It is also an important platform which civil society representatives from both the EU Member States and the EaP Countries can use to address their expectations and concerns.

To be honest with you I was going to have a more detailed report on the opportunities and challenges of the civil society in EaP countries yesterday, however my speech was canceled for unknown reasons.

So without further delay I would like to introduce some of the key priorities and expectations of the Civil Society Forum within the framework of the EaP.

There is a need for the Eastern Partnership countries to have clearer perspectives with regards to their further integration with the EU. The civil societies need clearer vision of where the Eastern Partnership leads their countries and expect the European Union to help in shaping that vision.

The civil society is ready to multiply its efforts to support more effective implementation of Eastern Partnership and thus the CSF needs more specific mechanisms and mandates for involvement. Although possibilities to convey the challenges, expectations and needs of the civil society to respective decision makers is important, the best indicator for the involvement is the extent to which the recommendations and the feedback of the civil society are reflected in the decisions made.

Civil Society's expertise and flexibility, mechanisms of participation and monitoring, can and shall be used to promote more effective democratization of the Eastern Partnership Countries. Civil Society expects the European Union to continue and be more active in addressing the issues of free and fair elections, protection of human rights and freedoms, consistent and effective implementation of institutional reforms and promotion of rule of law in Eastern Partnership Countries. This can be promoted via formulation of more specific and detailed deliverables to be provided by the Governments of the EaP Countries. Confidence building inside the Eastern Partnership and in wider Europe is another priority. On the example of Armenia, further and even more active involvement of civil society in Armenia-Azerbaijan and Armenia-Turkey normalization can be mentioned.



CSF believes that Eastern Partnership is not only an initiative aimed at supporting the integration of the 6 eastern neighbours with the EU but also a program that forms a sub-region that shares European values and works hard to promote peaceful and sustainable development.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Delivered by Mikayel Hovhannisyan, EaP CSF Armenia Country Facilitator, on 17 March 2015 at the Fourth Ordinary Session of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly in Yerevan