



Statement of the Civil Society Forum
«EU-Ukraine Summit 2011: Civil Society Dimension»

«Common Values — Common Future»

We, members of the National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, representatives of Ukrainian NGOs, including trade unions, organizations and associations of entrepreneurs,

- sharing common values of the European Union identified in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union,
- emphasizing Ukraine's European identity,
- taking into account that EU-Ukraine negotiations on the Association Agreement have been successfully completed, including the chapter on deep and comprehensive free trade area,

we wish to state that Ukraine still faces a number of unresolved problems that impede the EU-Ukraine dialog based on mutual trust, common understanding of democratic values and principles, human rights and rule of law.

Some of the problems are:

- a low level of public dialog on the country's modernization and Europeanization, discussion of the reform policy, and inadequate explanation of the expected results and possible risks of the reforms by the government;
- absence of mechanisms for implementation of political, legal, social and economic reforms in the process of Ukraine's European integration;
- lack of an effective top-level mechanism to coordinate European integration policies with a view to carry out domestic reforms according to the European Union standards;
- failure to comply with principles of good governance at various levels and imitation of public engagement in government decision-making;
- an inferior new law on parliamentary election that only partially reflects recommendations of the Venice Commission and whose certain provisions contradict decisions of the Constitutional Court of Ukraine; this, as well as the absence of proper political competition, jeopardizes free and fair parliamentary election in 2012;
- persecution of civil society leaders, human rights activists and political opposition, selective use of criminal laws that require significant changes, no progress in achieving judiciary independence or effective functioning of the courts of law, public prosecution and law enforcement agencies;
- restrictions of the right to peaceful assembly;
- concentration of political power around one center, as a result of yet another change of the Constitution of Ukraine in October 2010; distorted system of checks and balances in the constitutional organization of power, abandoned principles of government decentralization and effective local self-government;
- failure to implement counter-corruption measures, and lack of transparency in various government functions, particularly in public procurement;

- pressure upon the media coming from the financial and industrial groups close to the current administration; no progress with establishment of public broadcasting;
- slow progress and controversial development of legislative regulation of non-governmental organizations that would reflect recommendations of the Council of Europe and civil society needs;
- shrinking education reforms, rejection of university autonomy and equal access to higher education;
- absence of fair competition in small and medium business markets, and absence of most favored treatment for investments in the sector;
- lack of transparent rules in the energy market.

These are some of the problems and challenges that should be solved to promote European ambitions of Ukraine.

2. The Ukrainian civil society has actively worked in the recent years to improve the quality of politics and governance. One of our success stories is the law on access to information that was approved in late 2010 under pressure and in cooperation with civil society organizations and is now enacted. Ukraine's accession to the Energy Community on February 1, 2011, was another demand of the civil society.

3. The Ukrainian civil society is trying to *build Europe in Ukraine*, and it sees the European Union as its partner. As we join our efforts we expect the EU to do the following:

- implement Resolution of the European Parliament of December 1, 2011, primarily regarding the signing of the Association Agreement in the first half of 2012;
- publish the text of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement whose provisions must be taken into account while developing and implementing reforms by Ukrainian authorities;
- objectively assess Ukraine's internal situation with account of the civil society opinion, both in the EU and Ukraine;
- undertake, in cooperation with the civil society and Ukrainian Government, systemic efforts to prepare Ukraine, its public authorities and businesses, for implementation of the Association Agreement by developing, inter alia, EU assistance programs to reform Ukrainian government and local self-government;
- implement in full EU commitments to simplify issuance of Schengen visas, and particularly significantly increase the number of multiple-entry five-year visas as suggested by the current EU Visa Code and Visa Facilitation Agreement;
- reject further complication of visa procedures and amend the Visa Facilitation Agreement to issue long-term multiple-entry visas to all Ukrainian nationals with good visa history;
- engage in consistent dialog with the President and Government of Ukraine to ensure free and fair parliamentary election in 2012 as a precondition for enactment of the Association Agreement;
- support the civil society, particularly in monitoring the election campaign;
- develop clear criteria for providing technical assistance to Ukraine, replacing ineffective programs of budget support with conceptually justified programs of reform support with participation of the civil society.

4. Civil society institutions will continue their monitoring efforts, advocacy and educational work to promote democracy, rule of law, basic human rights and freedoms, media freedom, and good governance. At the same time, we are ready to provide expert assistance to the President, Government, and Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, should there be political will to accept open dialog and public engagement, to effectively implement European integration policies in organic combination with internal reforms that should transform Ukraine into a modern, competitive, and respected European nation.