



Resolution of the Eastern Partnership Youth Conference “Youth for Rights”

On immediate release of all political prisoners in the Eastern Partnership countries and Russian Federation

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Bratislava, Slovakia*

The Eastern Partnership Youth Conference “Youth for Rights”, organized by the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (EaP CSF) and held in Bratislava, Slovakia on 26-28 October 2016, condemns the illegal imprisonment of human rights and civic activists in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries and Russian Federation, and demands the release of all political prisoners remaining in jail.

The arrests of these activists who qualify as political prisoners and hostages including those captured in occupied should not be tolerated since they are jailed for opposing and criticizing the government, as well as expressing their political views. The current authoritarian regimes are trying to curb the activities of the civil society in those countries. Such persecutions inevitably lead to lack of political pluralism in the public space.

Mass repressions of various ferocity against active citizens and their family members continue up to this day. The people of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus and Russia face complete disregard of human rights and democratic freedoms.

The continuous detention of political prisoners constitutes a flagrant violation of fundamental principles set out in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and other international human rights documents, in particular, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, freedom of expression and information, freedom of assembly and association. We urge the Armenian, Azerbaijani, Belarusian and Russian governments to release all political prisoners remaining behind bars, both their own and foreign citizens.

Political prisoners in these countries need the solidarity of the international community. This non-compliance of the governments must not be ignored and should be addressed by the international human rights organizations, as well as the United Nations, European Union and the United States. The European Union institutions should make every effort in its Neighbourhood Policy for immediate and unconditional release of these prisoners. The EU should also review its policies in order not to contribute to the violations of rights in these countries.

It is our ultimate wish that all political prisoners in the EaP countries and Russia receive the due process they are entitled to. We thank the civil society community for their efforts in this field and encourage the EaP CSF National Platforms and civil society in Russia to continue putting pressure on the respective governments.

Participants of the Eastern Partnership Youth Conference “Youth for Rights”