

22 November 2018

**Statement by Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum
on the preparations of the upcoming EaP CSF Annual Assembly in Tbilisi in response
to the critical comments in the media in Azerbaijan**

In response to critical comments in the media in Azerbaijani, in particular Virtualaz.org, Haqqin.az, and Modern.az that the list of guests to the 2018 EaP CSF Annual Assembly contains notable omissions and that the Annual Assembly draft resolution fails to mention key problems for the Eastern Partnership, the Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum would like to stress that:

1. Preparations for the Annual Assembly are continuing and the guest list for the event is still being completed. The Steering Committee would be happy to welcome high level speakers not only from civil society but also from Eastern Partnership Governments, and that invitations are still being issued.
2. A planned resolution marking the 100th anniversary of the declarations of independence of many of our countries in 1918, which will be presented to the assembly for approval is still in draft form and that amendments have still to be made by the delegates. Therefore any discussion of the document at this stage is premature. We urge that the media, who are invited to cover the Annual Assembly, wait until the document is completed and approved before commenting on its content.
3. The EaP CSF Steering Committee states that the Forum is an independent network of non-governmental organisations working with the support of the European Union. The EaP CSF Steering Committee takes full and sole responsibility for its statements and these should not be identified with the views of the European Union or any of its institutions.