



**UKRAINIAN
NATIONAL PLATFORM**

EASTERN PARTNERSHIP CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM

Position of Ukrainian National Platform of the EaP CSF regarding the assessment of the results of the Eastern Partnership Summit on December 15, 2021

December 22, 2021

The Ukrainian national platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum welcomes the holding of the Eastern Partnership summit in Brussels on December 15, 2021. The very meeting of the leaders of the 5 Partner States and European institutions and member states demonstrates the continued political weight of the Eastern Partnership policy for building bilateral relations with the European Union, as well as multilateral cooperation in the region.

The Summit is taking place at a difficult time of significant political and socio-economic transformations in the region. Escalation of hybrid Russian aggression against Ukraine, protracted political crisis in Belarus, and new realities of the post-war situation in Azerbaijani-Armenian relations indicate the need to increase EU attention to the region where the European Neighborhood Policy was designed to bring stability. All this against the backdrop of the ongoing economic crisis in the region, generated by the consequences of the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic. Repeated postponement of the summit by the European Union in 2020-2021 indicates an understanding of the ambiguity of political processes in the countries of the region, a low common denominator at the level of 6 EaP Policy Partners.

Against this background, the results of the summit demonstrate a certain change in approaches and tools of cooperation in the region, which can initiate positive transformations and in-depth cooperation between the EU and partners.

We positively assess the mention in the final joint document of the summit of the EU's continued commitment to supporting territorial integrity within internationally recognized borders and the sovereignty of all EaP partners. At the same time, the European Union supports the resumption and continuation of efforts for the peaceful settlement of conflicts that continue in the Eastern Partnership region, in accordance with the principles of international law. However, although the document also notes the strengthening of the EU's role in preventing and resolving conflicts, trying to build trust between their parties, at present it is hardly possible to talk about the effectiveness and efficiency of EU participation in efforts to end or transform international conflicts. Unfortunately, traditionally Russia does not appear in the document as an aggressor and the main force for destabilizing the situation in the Eastern European region.



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Ukrainian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum calls on the EU to formulate and implement a more ambitious strategy for participating in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, including those provoked and supported by Russia.

We can also positively assess the EU's readiness to deepen the application of the principle of "more for more" and "less for less" in reform-oriented cooperation with partner states. Against this background, a historically important event is the recognition by the European Union of the "Associated trio" initiative of Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova as an association of partner states with an in-depth agenda for European integration. It is a pity that this mention in the declaration appeared only thanks to increased diplomatic work with individual EU members before and during the summit.

Separately, it is necessary to note the Joint Statement of the heads of state / government of the "Associated trio" – Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine on the results of the 6th Eastern Partnership Summit, which focused on the priorities of the three countries in cooperation with the European Union. This statement shows the wide range of common interests of the trio members, which goes far beyond the implementation of association agreements with the EU. At the same time, the parties recognize the need to strengthen the institutional development of the trio and coordinate joint efforts towards European integration, "including the European Union's recognition of the European perspective of the "Associated trio". Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova reminded the EU of the right to apply for membership of European states that respect the values of the EU in accordance with the Treaty on the European Union. This position significantly reinforces and deepens veiled references in the Joint Declaration of the EaP Summit on the recognition of European aspirations and the European perspective, as indicated in the preambles of the association agreements of the three members of the trio.

Ukrainian national platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum pays a lot of attention to the state of human rights in Belarus. Therefore, the EU's readiness to continue supporting civil society in the neighboring state, despite the official statements of the authoritarian regime about withdrawing from the EaP policy, is perceived by us as a step in the right direction. The UNP expresses its readiness to join initiatives to provide assistance to Belarusian citizens, public activists and journalists who are under pressure from the Belarusian authorities. At the same time, we call on the EU to continue sanctions and economic pressure on regime of O. Lukashenko in order to force him to reach a political compromise in the country and introduce democratic standards of governance. The migration crisis provoked by Belarus with the support of Russia indicates a high level of threat to the security environment of Central and Eastern Europe.

The provision of the declaration on cooperation with third countries based on a value-based approach, taking into account complementarity with other regional formats, is commendable. The proposed combination of individual opportunities in the Eastern Partnership



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and Black Sea Synergy format may generally bring positive results, but it requires significant updating and filling in the content of the Black Sea Synergy initiative.

Of course, almost the main element of the Declaration is the list of new priorities of the Eastern Partnership until 2025, which should replace the 20 achievements of the EaP until 2020. The approach to setting priorities uses a different principle from the previous achievement horizon. The European Union's support for the implementation of these priorities through a number of financial instruments is commendable. One of these mechanisms is the EU regional economic and investment plan, which is planned at the level of 2.3 billion euros. However, an additional effect of this plan may be to attract about 17 billion euros of additional investment from public and private sources. Strengthening the investment potential of the Eastern Partnership region can become an additional driver for launching economy-oriented reforms in partner countries, especially taking into account the principle of conditioning when forming investment proposals for each of the countries. The UNP calls on the governments of the "Associated trio" states to accelerate the implementation of the necessary reforms in the field of judicial proceedings, anti-corruption and the rule of law in order to ensure conditions for the formation of opportunities to attract investment capital.

The EU's experience and assistance are needed to adjust the course of partner states to achieve climate neutrality by 2050, energy transit and a circular economy. The goals of the new EaP policy once again indicate that environmental issues should be integrated into other spheres of life in Ukraine, and not discarded as secondary in solving economic and social problems, including during pandemics and other crises. This position of the EU and the vision of the EaP policy gives a new impetus to Ukraine to make Environmental Protection a cross-cutting element of state policy, as well as to take into account the consequences for the environment when choosing a particular political decision.

Joining the European Green course will further contribute to getting closer to the norms and standards of the European Union. However, such cooperation should not be discriminatory against EU external partners, including interested EaP partners.

The summit declaration also notes progress in cooperation with individual EaP partner states within the framework of the EU's common security and defense policy, participation in EU missions and operations, and provision of EU support within the framework of the European peace instrument. Building resilience to disinformation involves strong independent media and civil society, where EU support builds additional capabilities and competencies. The UNP calls for increased support for initiatives aimed at forming a system of strategic communications in partner states, governmental and non-governmental components of combating hybrid threats, and strengthening media literacy. In this context, the UNP appeals to European institutions with a proposal to strengthen the security component in cooperation with partners, to include stakeholders from the EaP region in the defense and security mechanisms that exist or are planned in the future in the EU.



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Special attention should be paid to the topic of cooperation between the EU and partner countries in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences. The assistance provided by the Team Europe initiative to provide vaccines, counter disinformation and build the sustainability of National Health Systems deserves commendable praise. The continuation of such cooperation is now critical for most countries in the region, including on the supply of vaccines. An important milestone was the mutual recognition of digital certificates between the EU and Ukraine, Armenia, Georgia, and Moldova.

Investing in people and the knowledge society, which is among the top 10 goals until 2025, makes sense to expand the interpretation by being able to direct these projects not only to the individual mobility of teachers, researchers, but also to the direction of conducting analytical research, educational projects for adults both common to the Eastern Partnership countries, and with a focus on a single country.

The Ukrainian national platform, as part of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, supports the EU's focus on providing opportunities for the development of civil society in partner states, the formation of a multi-level effective non-governmental sector capable of evaluating and monitoring state institutions in compliance with democratic governance principles.

By the next Eastern Partnership Summit, which is tentatively scheduled for 2023, both the EU and partner states should take measures to further deepen cooperation and form effective mechanisms to achieve new Eastern Partnership Priorities by 2025.

For this purpose, the Ukrainian national platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum offers:

the Government of Ukraine:

1. In accordance with bilateral commitments, strengthen the implementation of judicial and anti-corruption reforms, which are cornerstones in forming an ambitious agenda with the EU.
2. Based on the adopted priorities of the Eastern Partnership until 2025, taking into account bilateral program documents in the relevant areas, the relevant central executive committee should prepare a concept for achieving the goals and the necessary financial instruments and the amount of support from the EU. In this context, it would be advisable to analyze the new financial mechanisms and programs launched by the EU in 2021, in thematic and geographical areas.
3. Together with civil society, introduce periodic monitoring of the achievement of new EaP priorities, based on clear measurable indicators, and the achievement of flagship initiatives for Ukraine.



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Governments of the Associated trio countries:

4. The trio states are now attached to the EU economic and investment plan, which provides opportunities to reformat the algorithm and amount of funding for joint activities under the EaP. It is advisable to prepare a list of priority initiatives in the field of transport and infrastructure projects that may be of general interest and fall under the requirements for financing within the framework of Economic and investment plan of the Eastern Partnership.
5. Taking into account the common security challenges, the members of the Associated trio should intensify cooperation with EU institutions in the field of security and defense, as well as develop a coordinated approach to participating in the new strategic initiative “strategic compass”, which is aimed at strengthening the EU's resilience and solidarity to various external threats.

the EU:

6. The priorities approved during the summit should be clearly implemented by European institutions at the level of medium-term indicative programs and annual plans, with a clear understanding of the amount of resources provided for partners within each of the priorities.