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*23 April 2018*

### **Letter to the Armenian Authorities on the Peaceful Protests in Armenia**

The Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum demands that the authorities of the Republic of Armenia immediately free all persons detained by the police during the peaceful demonstrations in the past nine days. These include Nikol Pashinyan, Sasun Mikaelian and Ararat Mirzoyan who are members of parliament and other detained leaders of the protests such as Davit Sanasaryan and Armen Grigoryan who have done nothing other than to organise people in exercising their right free assembly.

The situation also requires that the authorities show restraint in dealing with continuing protests and undertake a dialogue with the protesters and their leaders to bring about an agreement which is acceptable to both sides.

The recently signed Comprehensive and Enhanced Cooperation Agreement (CEPA) between the European Union and Armenia can only be implemented if peace returns to the streets of Yerevan and other Armenian regions and both sides work for a solution which leads to early elections which will establish the democratic legitimacy of the elected authorities.

Only a leadership elected, in free and fair elections, can oversee the implementation of the CEPA and re establish a legitimate basis for the reforms which await Armenia. The path of repression which the current leadership of the country appears to have embarked on marks a road to nowhere and risks the prolongation of the current crisis without any guarantee that lasting social peace can be established and a prosperous future for the country be ensured.

Yours Sincerely,

***Members of the Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum***