

5 August 2019

**Statement by Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum on the violent repression of peaceful protests in the Russian Federation**

The Steering Committee of Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (EaP CSF) is concerned about the brutality shown by Russian authorities, in suppressing peaceful protests, which took place in Moscow on Saturday, 27 July 2019. We strongly condemn the application of physical force on the participants of this peaceful protest, and further arrests of more than 1,000 demonstrators, for using their civil rights to publicly express their views, in relation to stringent societal problems.

The Steering Committee considers unacceptable the actions of intimidation, and the subsequent persecution of those who actively participated in the protests organised in Moscow, as well as the political opponents of the government. The Steering Committee recalls that freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and association are basic attributes of a democratic society. These attributes are included in the legislation of the Russian Federation, as well as in international agreements, which regulate the human rights guarantees, and to which the Russian Federation is a part of, having signed and ratified those agreements. The abuses, which happened on the streets of Moscow last week are a clear disrespect of human rights and fundamental freedoms, which will always be condemned by democratic societies.

In this regard, we express our full solidarity towards Russian civil society and broader society to stand for their rights and appeal to Russian authorities to release all protesters and activists, who were arrested as a result of the peaceful protests in Moscow, during 27-29 July 2019. Moreover, we call on the international institutions and organisations, which work on human rights and fundamental freedoms, to monitor and investigate all the abuses committed by the Russian authorities against its own citizens.

The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (EaP CSF) is unique multi-layered regional civil society platform aimed at promoting European integration, facilitating reforms and democratic transformations in the six Eastern Partnership countries - Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Serving as the civil society and people-to-people dimension of the Eastern Partnership, the EaP CSF strives to strengthen civil society in the region, boost pluralism in public discourse and policy making by promoting participatory democracy and fundamental freedoms. The EaP CSF is a non-partisan bona fide non-governmental organisation.

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