



EASTERN PARTNERSHIP
Civil Society Forum

VV_11_06

11th of March 2011

Baroness Catherine Margaret Ashton

High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the European Union

Ref : Statement of support to the Civil Society in Southern Mediterranean Countries

Dear High Representative Catherine Ashton,

On behalf of the Civil Society Forum of the Eastern Partnership, we proclaim unanimously our support and solidarity with civil societies of Egypt, Tunisia, Libya and other countries of the Southern Neighborhood, which are striving for democracy and better life. We deeply grieve about all victims of the violent confrontation with the forces opposing the democratic changes. We express also our particular concern about the people in disgrace and immigrants in great need. We call the EU to provide them with necessary support in order to confirm the real values of solidarity on which the EU is founded.

We consider the respect for the fundamental human rights, democracy are among the fundamental basis for prosperity and welfare of all countries all over the world. We welcomed the changes in the North Africa region with a hope for a better future for this region.

Therefore it is so important for the EU to find a proper balance between its engagement in the East and in the South. Both directions are equally important for the future security of the EU borders and Europe as a continent even though there are facing different challenges and problems.

However we would like to strongly recommend seeing the two great political dimensions of the European neighborhood policy – The East and the South – as a two sides of the same coin, that need to be treated equally in terms of political and financial attention. All actions undertaken by the European Union in regard to the Mediterranean Region should not be made on the account of the Eastern Partnership. This would be in contradiction with the goals of the European neighborhood policy.

The letter by the Foreign Ministers of France, Spain, Cyprus, Greece, Malta and Slovenia – suggests shifting funds from the East to the South. We understand that the dynamics and scale of the North African developments need an appropriate and fast reaction of the EU. In the same time we recommend that the decisions on how to support the democratic changes in the concerned countries must take into consideration wider aspects of the European Neighborhood Policy and should not undermine the commitments already made by the Union in the Eastern Partnership policy.

We, at the Civil Society Forum, a community of hundreds of civil society organizations from the EU member states and EaP partner countries, express our readiness to share existing experience with civil society organizations from Northern Africa and Middle East and to contribute to the discussion about the lessons learnt from the implementation of the European Neighborhood Policy.

In this respect, we will take the contact with the Civil Society organizations and coordination in the South and recommend inviting some of their representatives to take part in the future Civil Society Forum for Eastern Partnership, which will take place in Poznan this year. We also recommend the European Union to take in due count the role of civil society in the next actions in the future Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean.

We thank you for your attention and remain at your disposal for any future contacts.

On behalf of the Steering Committee of the EaP Civil Society Forum (<http://www.eap-csf.eu>)

Ulad Vialichka, Co-Chair of the CSF Steering Committee, Chairperson of EUROBELARUS



Antonella Valmorbida, Co-Chair of the CSF Steering Committee, Director of ALDA

