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УСХОДНЯГА ПАРТНЁРСТВА

The appeal

**of the Belarusian National Platform
of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum**

**“Ament the recognition of the European perspective
for the countries of the Eastern Partnership”**

15 April 2015

We, participants of the Belarusian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, underline the special importance of the upcoming Eastern Partnership Summit in Riga.

We would like to highlight that the Riga Eastern Partnership Summit will take place against the background of Russia's aggression, i.e. armed conflicts, the occupation and annexation of the territories, and the unprecedented economic pressure on the Eastern Partnership countries, carried out by the Russian Federation in reply to the European choice of the Ukrainian, Georgian, and Moldavian peoples.

In the light of these challenges, the Riga Summit should answer the question of how the United Europe sees the future of the other part of Europe.

Since the moment they received their independence, the Eastern Partnership countries have come a long and difficult way. The EU Association Agreements signed by Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine are the latest achievements on this way. These Agreements, including the agreements to create the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area, are the plan of modernizing these countries according to the European model; they make these countries closer to their common purpose — to become members of the European Union.

We do realize that this goal cannot be reached without a long and difficult way that presupposes the implementation of large-scale reforms in all spheres of public life. We emphasize that the people of Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova have made a firm choice to become EU members. We also think that the European choice has no other reasonable alternative for the countries which have not signed their EU Association Agreements yet, i.e. Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Belarus.

Russia's aggression upon Georgia in August 2008 and especially the latest developments in Ukraine create the visibility that these created territorial problems and frozen conflicts make these countries the hostages of the situation and occlude the European perspective for them. We consider that if this is the way that the aggressor tries to achieve its objective, then it only spurs it to continue its aggressive policy.

The Russian Federation is using this situation and, by launching an aggressive information campaign, is trying to persuade the population of the Eastern Partnership countries that they have no real chances of joining the European Union, which makes the integration with Russia the only real alternative of development.

A number of the EU's official documents, including the joint declarations of the Eastern Partnership Summits, as well as the EU Association Agreements signed by the three countries, recognize the historical connections and general values shared by our countries and the EU Member States. Some provisions of these Agreements welcome the European aspirations of our countries and approve their European choice. Resolutions of the European Parliament directly admit the European perspective and the right of our countries to apply for the EU membership, according to Article 49 of the Treaty on the European Union.

We would like to accentuate that we, participants of the Belarusian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, as well as our colleagues from Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia, expect from participants of the Riga Summit a trenchant message that will confirm that, in spite of Russia's aggression upon a number of the Eastern Partnership countries, their European perspective is universally acknowledged and that, being European countries, our states cannot be deprived of their right to become full members of the United Europe.

We urge the European Union and its Member States to openly recognize the European perspective for Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine at the Riga Eastern Partnership Summit!

Belarusian civil society organizations — members of the Belarusian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (69 organizations).