



## **S T A T E M E N T**

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

**Georgian National Platform**

The Georgian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum is worried by an anti-constitutional, and anti-state election video ad of the political party “The Centrists” broadcast by the Georgian Public Broadcaster (GPB), on August 13, 2016. The video disrupts officially adopted pro-Western orientation of the Country.

We welcome swift and unanimous social protest to the afore-mentioned video and the policy of the “Centrists” party. We also assess positively the adequate reaction the GPB has shown to societal demands, which resulted in removing the video from the broadcast schedule.

The GPB management must show a will, and respect the Constitution of the Country, law regulating the operations of the Public Broadcaster of Georgia, and predetermined programmatic priorities of the Broadcaster. Therefore, in the future, the Broadcaster should not allow airing political adverts or other products of similar nature or content, and it must show great care not to allow misuse of its airtime by a discourse, that is against the territorial integrity of the Country and is directed against its sovereignty.

Furthermore, we are concerned, that in the pre-election period, Pro-Russian political forces have become active and have shown their face in the public domain, in a country, in which Russian military forces continue to occupy its substantial territories.

The respective state authorities must launch timely investigation of these tendencies. Also, it is important, these bodies report to public in full and inform

*Statement initiated by the “Georgian Trade Union Confederation”*

us about what the State strategy and vision is regarding the so called Russian hard and soft powers.

We believe, that the emergence of these political forces may serve the purpose of inciting civil conflict and provoking tensions. Therefore, the respective authorities must take appropriate measures in a timely manner, foreseen by the Georgian laws, so that political parties and electoral subjects (that respect Georgia's sovereignty, territorial integrity and other principles enshrined in the Georgian Constitution) are allowed to campaign for the elections in a free, democratic, and competitive environment.

We, the Platform member organizations express our readiness to contribute to strengthening Georgia's European choice, and for preventing damaging consequences brought about by hybrid challenges sponsored by the occupant state. Furthermore, we are ready, if needed, to contribute to refining the respective laws and regulations, which will prevent political actors that pursue the interests of hostile foreign powers from enjoying access to public airtime, and thus impacting public opinion. This act goes above and beyond the right to freedom of speech and expression, threatening the sovereignty of our Country, and the interests of our citizens.

***Signatories:***

1. Georgian Trade Union Confederation
2. Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies
3. Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI)
4. Georgian Young Lawyers Association
5. European Initiative - Liberal Academy Tbilisi
6. Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC)
7. Local Democracy Agency - Georgia
8. Open Society Georgia Foundation
9. Association European Studies for the Innovative Development of Georgia
10. Public Defender
11. Georgian Association "Woman in Business"
12. Association "Green Alternative"
13. Peaceful and Business Caucasus
14. Human Rights Centre
15. "School-Family-Society" Association
16. Association of Tea Producers Georgia "Georgian Tea"
17. Civil Council on Defense and Security Issues
18. Institute for Euro-Atlantic integration and strategic studies
19. Foundation "Multi-Ethnic Resource Centre on Civic Education Development"
20. Youth Alternative
21. Association for the efficient use of the Georgian energy resources
22. Foundation "Caucasus Environment"
23. Civil Society and Democracy Development Center
24. United Public Movement "Multinational Georgia"
25. Georgian Association of Regional Broadcasters
26. Repatriates' Union
27. International Center for Advancement of Research, Technology & Innovation (ICARTI)
28. World Experience for Georgia
29. "Women Enterprise" Fund Georgia
30. International Business Development and Investment Promotion Centre
31. Bridge of Friendship – Kartlosi
32. Association "Atinati"

*Statement initiated by the "Georgian Trade Union Confederation"*

- 33.IDP Association "Consent"
- 34.International Foundation - Lea
- 35.Healthy World
- 36.Youth for Justice – Georgia
- 37.Association “Psychea”
- 38.Imereti Regional Scientific Union – “Spektri”
- 39.Democracy and Development Center
- 40.Association “Merkuri”