



GEORGIAN NATIONAL PLATFORM

EASTERN PARTNERSHIP CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM

High-level conference “European Choice of the Georgian People – Challenges and Future Perspectives” organized by the Georgian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum and the Government of Georgia in online format on 27-28 May 2021. The event gathered more than 150 Georgian NP member CSOs, EU stakeholders and the Eastern Partnership region. European Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement, Ambassador of the European Union to Georgia, National facilitator for Georgia and co-chair of the Eastern Partnership Civil Steering Committee led the introductory session.

Chairperson of the Georgian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum expressed solidarity and support to Belarusian people.

For two days twelve sessions held, including two high-level panels, thematic working group discussions and subgroup sessions. During all discussions attendees had an opportunity not only to discuss issues related to Georgia’s gradual integration with the EU and important aspects of this complex process, but also ask questions directly to the stakeholders and receive qualified information from their side.

Commissioner Várhelyi welcomed the audience and underlined the importance of conducting of joint high-level conference. “In our cooperation with partner countries civil society paid a key role in two aspects, first – providing direct support for local communities and groups in need and second-as a credible interlocutor for the governments in policy-making. This work should continue.

“Looking ahead we believe that it is important to further strengthen the linkages between CSOs and people as well as improve consultative mechanisms with the authorities both at national and regional level. Georgia is a key partner for the European Union. Our relations are based on ambitious Association Agreement with Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area. The European Union will continue to support you to the benefit of Georgian people”-stated Olivér Várhelyi, European Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement.

Prime-minister of Georgia, welcomed the audience and thanked the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Georgian National Platform for organizing high-level event. Mr.Irakli Garibashvili stressed that “Democratic development of Georgia and integration into European family has no alternative. In these endeavors the role of civil society is critical and European future of Georgia that determines and sets the mood of close cooperation between the Civil Society and the government.

Supporting of civil society is crucial for implementing reforms in the country. The dialogue between the civil society and the government is of utmost importance and in near future we will convince everyone that Georgia deserves full membership.

Today it is the time we move forward and productive, active steps will be taken towards the EU. By 2024 Georgia is planning for full membership and support, as well as active participation of civil sector is needed.

This conference is one of the tools and effective format to enhance cooperation with the Georgian National Platform”.

Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia expressed gratitude to Georgian National Platform for organizing the conference, “It is a tradition holding of joint high-level conference. This underlines the strength of Civil Society Organizations in Georgia and readiness of the government to actively cooperate. Civil Society plays a critical role in democratization process and title of the event is well formulated, the European choice of the people of Georgia. It is logic continuation of European choice.

Georgia is one of the key allies in the region that motivate us to be stronger. Mr. David Zalkaliani noted the importance of EaP summit to be held in Autumn 2021.

Dialogues and active discussions conducted on most acute themes, inter se: implementation of the agreement proposed by European Council President Charles Michel.

During the 2nd high-level panel discussed Role of the EU in strengthening Democracy in the EaP Region and taking stock of the EU`s recent engagement in the solving political crisis in Georgia. Rapporteurs overviewed important issues such as polarization, electoral reform, judiciary, minority rights in the elections and checks and balances within the Parliament.

All recordings of the conference are available at youtube and via social media page, FB of the EaP CSF Georgian National Platform.

Information about the conference was also posted on the information portal. Relevant links are available through our social networks.

Press release was sent out to updated list of media outlets and TV channels. All information related to the conference were posted on Social media page, please see the following links:

<https://www.facebook.com/EaP-CSF-Georgian-National-Platform-559919214104843/photos/pcb.3923092291120835/3923095697787161/>

It is important to mention that the conference once again confirmed importance of the Eastern Partnership and it remains ambitious, inclusive framework for cooperation.