



RESOLUTION of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum on latest developments along the occupation line with breakaway South Ossetia

Members of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum express their deep concern over the latest developments along the occupation line with breakaway South Ossetia. With the violation of international law and 2008 Ceasefire Agreement between Russia and Georgia, negotiated with support of EU and its member states, Russian military forces have stepped up the process of setting up barbed wire fences across the administrative dividing line, moving the occupation line forward inside Georgian territory by several hundred meters in some areas.

This has had grave consequences for the residents of the areas adjacent to the occupation line. In villages of Dvani and Ditsi of Shida Kartli region, located alongside the division line, many families from the local Georgian population have lost their agricultural lands, the only source for income, and are denied access to water sources which are now behind the occupation line. On the 23 of September, the occupation forces reportedly obliged the residents of Dvani to suddenly leave their houses and/or harvest crops from their lands on the other side of the redrawn occupation border.

Despite the efforts of the international community, the government of Georgia and local civil society organizations, the process of constructing different types of barriers, started in 2009, has been intensified since the beginning of 2013. A shift of the occupation line left the objects of crucial importance to the local population, such as water supply installations, roads, pastures, forest, sacred places and cemeteries. We believe these actions serve the goal of oppressing the local community and forcing them to vacate the villages adjacent to the conflict zone, further reinforcing the occupation of Georgian territories.

The Russian occupation forces violate the rights and freedoms of population of occupied and neighbour territories, claiming in the meantime that they are implementing the 2008 ceasefire agreement between Georgia and Russia.

As to the mediator and co-signatory of the 2008 ceasefire agreement we call on the European Union and Member States to

- Openly request the Russian Federation to implement the 2008 agreement;
- Come out with new effective international mechanisms and formats that would protect the rights of the affected people and sovereignty of Georgia.

We believe that, the increased pressure by Russian military forces on Georgian civilians and settlements near the occupational line, is caused by Georgia's EU aspiration. Georgia is one of the best performers in EaP region regarding EU integration. Therefore, we believe that EU has a responsibility to defend Georgia from Russia's unacceptable actions which are designed to distance Georgia from the EU.