

11 April 2016

**Appeal by the EaP CSF Steering Committee to the members  
of the Armenian and Azerbaijani National Platforms  
of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum**

Dear Platform members,

The recent outbreak of fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh brings to the fore the urgent need to resolve the conflict between your two countries in a peaceful, just and equitable way which will enable Armenia and Azerbaijan to live in peace.

Peace among neighbours is one of the aims of the European Union, which successfully settled age-old conflicts in Europe allowing once hostile countries to live and work together. Peace among neighbours is also one of the aims of the Eastern Partnership and its Civil Society Forum, to which you belong.

Lasting peace can only be ensured on the basis of truth. It is thus imperative that the OSCE Minsk Group investigate the recent clashes, identify the initiators and those responsible for war crimes.

The latest renewal of bloodshed in Nagorno-Karabakh marks the moment to look for a lasting peaceful settlement of this conflict and not to exacerbate relations between your two countries and their civil societies. Whatever the position of individual civil society organisations, which have the right to express their views, this is not the moment to engage our National Platforms in the confrontation. Nor is this the time to look to military means to settle the issues, which divide you. Neither the use of force nor demands for further military action will resolve these issues. Instead it is crucial, in the first place, to assess the extent of human suffering, which the conflict has brought and organise help for the casualties and the families of those who have suffered.

We also appeal to you to renew your support for civil society organisations, which have been working for peace in the region as they are needed now more than ever. Also we must look for ways of supporting peace efforts by the European Union and by Herbert Salber, its special representative in the Caucasus.

We ask you to engage in dialogue to end this conflict and appeal to your respective governments to facilitate this dialogue. The Civil Society Forum will support you in all these endeavours.

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