

Petro Poroshenko, President, Ukraine

Volodymyr Groysman, Prime Minister, Ukraine

Andriy Parubiy, Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada, Ukraine

Pavlo Klimkin, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ukraine

Donald Tusk, President, European Council

Jean-Claude Juncker, President, European Commission

Federica Mogherini, Vice-President of the European Commission, High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

Johannes Hahn, European Commissioner for Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations

Antonio Tajani, President, European Parliament

Ministers of Foreign Affairs, EU Member States

Pedro Agramunt, President, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General, Council of Europe

Nils Muižnieks, Commissioner for Human Rights, Council of Europe

Christine Muttonen, President, OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

Michael Georg Link, Director, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)

Lamberto Zannier, Secretary General, Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)

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Statement by the Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum on the Recent Amendments to the Law on Electronic Declaration of Assets in Ukraine

The Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum regrets the retreat of Ukrainian authorities from the values of transparency and democracy towards the attempts to control the independent voices in the society. In particular, on 30 March 2017, the amendments to the law on electronic declaration of assets entered into force. According to these amendments, individuals engaged in anti-corruption activities (civic activists, businesses providing anti-corruption CSOs with services, representatives of institutions supporting anti-corruption activists) have to submit e-declarations for their assets on an equal basis with civil servants.

These changes have been criticized by the civic activists, lawyers and representatives of the Ukraine's international partners (the EU and G7 member states) for discriminatory, selective and manipulative approach to legal norms.

On the one hand, such amendments discriminate a group of Ukrainian citizens on the basis of their activities and impose additional restrictions on anti-corruption activists. On the other hand, extremely vague norms of the amended law allow for adding to the lists of anti-corruption activists almost any civic activist, entrepreneur or citizen critical of authorities at their discretion.

In addition, the amendments to the Law “On Prevention of Corruption” increase a risk of launching the suspension mechanism for the visa-free regime after it is granted to Ukraine. Presumably, they might be considered by the European Commission as a setback to reforms introduced under the Visa Liberalization Action Plan.

Moreover, the law does not significantly increase the transparency of activities in the sphere of countering corruption since the majority of NGOs working in this area already publish regular financial reports.

Thus, the amendments to the Law “On Prevention of Corruption” can be recognized as those pushing Ukraine backwards, and depreciating the hard-earned gains of the past three years in ensuring openness in society, accountability of the authorities, democracy and freedom.

Taking into account the above-mentioned, the Steering Committee urges the Ukrainian government to repeal this legislation in order to avoid considerable restrictions on the activities of anti-corruption organisations and activists, organisations providing support, and civil society as a whole.

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