

Serzh Sargsyan, President, Republic of Armenia

Galust Sahakyan, President of the National Assembly, Republic of Armenia

Donald Tusk, President, European Council

Jean-Claude Juncker, President, European Commission

Martin Schulz, President, European Parliament

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

Ministers of Foreign Affairs, EU Member States

Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General, Council of Europe

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

Nils Muižnieks, Commissioner for Human Rights, Council of Europe

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

Ilkka Kanerva, President, OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

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

Statement by the Steering Committee of the Civil Society Forum on the Detention of Levon Barseghyan

The Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum condemns the detention of Levon Barseghyan, Chairman of the Board of the Gyumri Journalists Club „Asbarez”, by the Armenian authorities after making a public speech in Yerevan, in which he criticised the President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan.

The apparent reason for his detention is ludicrous. The authorities claim that a penknife was found on his person.

We also condemn his treatment while in detention (lack of food and water, as well as access to bathroom facilities) which led to the deterioration of his state of health and the need to call an ambulance.

Mr Barseghyan is a respected member of the Civil Society Forum and the way he is treated is a test case of Armenia’s commitment to European values and to good relations with the European Union.

We have reason to believe that many other Armenian citizens have been detained in Yerevan in recent days in the wake of the attack on the Erebuni police station. The grounds for these arrests may be as preposterous as that of our colleague.

We urge the Armenian authorities to release Levon Barseghyan and all other people unlawfully detained only because they exercised the constitutional freedoms of assembly, expression and speech. All officials who abused their power should be held accountable.

We call on the European Union to take all possible steps to ensure that the Armenian authorities release Levon Barseghyan and all the people detained on political grounds, and that an impartial investigation of the actions by the police is conducted.

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