



EU-ARMENIA CIVIL SOCIETY PLATFORM

8th meeting, Yerevan, 15 April 2026

JOINT DECLARATION

The EU-Armenia Civil Society Platform (EU-ARM CSP) is one of the bodies established under the European Union-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA). It enables civil society organisations (CSOs) from both sides to monitor implementation and prepare recommendations for the relevant authorities.

The eighth meeting of the EU-ARM CSP was held on 15 April 2026 in Yerevan, Armenia.

With regard to the implementation of CEPA and progress in EU-Armenia relations more broadly, the EU-Armenia Civil Society Platform:

1. welcomes the rapidly expanding and deepening EU-Armenia partnership, as reflected in recent high-level visits and political exchanges, the Strategic Agenda for the EU-Armenia Partnership adopted on 2 December 2025, and the effective implementation of CEPA; expresses the hope that bilateral relations will continue to deepen further in the near future;
2. welcomes the ongoing Visa Liberalisation Dialogue and the finalisation of the Action Plan on Visa Liberalisation (VLAP); encourages the Armenian authorities to undertake sustained implementation efforts, with appropriate EU technical assistance and close cooperation with relevant stakeholders, including social partners and civil society organisations;
3. welcomes the adoption by the Government of Armenia of the updated Roadmap for CEPA Implementation on 9 January 2026 and encourages the Armenian authorities to ensure the timely, transparent and effective implementation of the remaining CEPA commitments, with meaningful consultation of social partners and civil society organisations, including this platform;
4. underlines that the implementation of Armenia's commitments under CEPA and the Strategic Agenda for the EU-Armenia Partnership should be firmly grounded in democracy, the rule of

law, human rights and social justice, with meaningful involvement of civil society and social partners; looks forward to the first dedicated EU-Armenia Summit in Yerevan on 5 May 2026 as an opportunity to further advance this inclusive and values-based partnership;

5. welcomes Armenia's hosting of the eighth European Political Community Summit in Yerevan on 4 May 2026 as a strong signal of Armenia's commitment to wider European cooperation and of the country's place in the broader European political family;
6. highlights the importance of structured, inclusive and constructive dialogue and cooperation with social partners and civil society organisations; stresses the importance of broad and inclusive consultation with social partners, expert bodies and civil society organisations when preparing draft laws, and underlines the need for transparency, equal treatment and public accessibility of outcomes;
7. stresses the importance of sustained and predictable EU support for Armenia's reform agenda, resilience and closer alignment with the European Union, including beyond 2027, and of greater regional and interregional cooperation in transport, energy and digital infrastructure;
8. highlights the importance of stepping up cooperation in civil aviation and encourages the EU to provide technical support aimed at improving aviation safety oversight and helping Armenian air carriers meet the requirements necessary for removal from the EU Safety List;
9. stresses the importance of improving Armenian access to the EU single market by speeding up regulatory alignment under CEPA, boosting conformity assessment capacity and lowering technical barriers to trade, thereby facilitating exports of Armenian goods to the EU;
10. emphasises the importance of supporting the development of Armenia's export capacities towards the European Union by pursuing regulatory alignment under CEPA, strengthening quality infrastructure and improving access to information on EU standards and certification requirements; encourages the continued provision of support to Armenian businesses, in particular SMEs, including through awareness-raising, training, advisory services and practical capacity-building measures, in order to facilitate compliance with EU requirements and promote greater participation in export activities, including in the context of market diversification efforts;

On the rule of law, justice and human rights

11. encourages continued EU engagement to support the rights, protection and long-term prospects of Armenians displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh, including their social integration,

while pointing out that any returns should be voluntary, safe, dignified, implemented in accordance with international law, and accompanied by credible and effective safeguards for the rights and security of returnees;

12. stresses the importance of furthering reforms in the areas of the rule of law, the justice system, public administration, human rights protection, policing, and the penitentiary and probation sectors; calls for enhanced efforts to guarantee transparent, efficient and timely implementation of these reform agendas, with continued EU support where appropriate;
13. acknowledges concerns raised by civil society organisations and international monitoring bodies about cases involving excessive use of force by law enforcement authorities and the lack of effective investigation; highlights the need to reinforce independent, impartial and effective investigative mechanisms in order to ensure accountability and strengthen public confidence;
14. reaffirms the need to uphold equality before the law and ensure that pre-trial detention is applied strictly as a measure of last resort, in line with European legal standards; encourages further steps to enhance judicial scrutiny and safeguards;
15. emphasises the need to fully protect freedom of expression, while ensuring that any restrictions are consistent with international human rights obligations, pursue legitimate aims, and remain necessary and proportionate within a democratic society;
16. emphasises the importance of safeguarding freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of expression for all persons in Armenia, in line with Armenia's democratic commitments and international human rights obligations, and calls for any restrictions to remain lawful, necessary and proportionate;
17. expresses concern about the increasingly polarised tone of pre-electoral discourse and calls on all political forces to refrain from hate speech, manipulative propaganda, knowingly misleading claims and other forms of irresponsible rhetoric; underlines that elections should be a contest of manifestos and ideas conducted in a respectful, fact-based and socially responsible public debate;
18. stresses the importance of safeguarding democratic space, institutional autonomy, pluralism, and academic and artistic freedom, and calls on the authorities to ensure that public, cultural and academic institutions remain free from political pressure, intimidation and informal ideological control;

On anti-corruption policies

19. acknowledges the institutional reforms undertaken in recent years to strengthen Armenia's anti-corruption framework, including the establishment of specialised bodies such as the Anti-Corruption Committee, the Corruption Prevention Commission, anti-corruption courts and relevant prosecutorial units; notes that challenges remain in ensuring the full independence of these institutions and encourages continued efforts to provide them with adequate resources and ensure their operational effectiveness;
20. notes that, despite these institutional developments, reforms should translate into tangible improvements in public trust and perception; calls for greater efforts to be made to ensure the effective implementation of anti-corruption policies and the achievement of measurable results;
21. emphasises the importance of strengthening preventive anti-corruption mechanisms, including effective conflict-of-interest management, as well as greater transparency and accountability in public administration, including in public procurement and human resource management processes;
22. stresses the importance of ensuring transparency and public trust in anti-corruption efforts, including through transparent and merit-based selection procedures within anti-corruption institutions and openness in judicial proceedings concerning corruption and confiscation of property of illicit origin in cases of significant public interest; also notes the importance of establishing clear and transparent mechanisms for the management and allocation of assets recovered through confiscation of property of illicit origin;

On labour and employment policies and social dialogue

23. welcomes the signing in January 2026 of the Tripartite Republican Collective Agreement as a positive development and encourages further efforts to establish a functioning and institutionalised national consultation and collective bargaining mechanism in line with International Labour Organization (ILO) standards and CEPA commitments; underlines that tripartite documents should be followed by the development of a genuine and permanent system of social dialogue;
24. reaffirms the trade unions' commitment to democratic values, the rule of law and the protection of fundamental rights as essential pillars of sustainable social and economic development. Within the framework of CEPA, democracy should be further strengthened through the meaningful participation of workers and their representative organisations in shaping public policies and socio-economic reforms;

25. emphasises that effective social dialogue between governments, employers and trade unions is essential for democratic governance and sustainable development. Strengthening social dialogue within the CEPA framework will support labour-market reforms, improve working conditions and promote social cohesion while advancing Armenia's alignment with European social and labour standards;
26. encourages the designation of an appropriate government body with a negotiating mandate for the public sector in order to strengthen collective bargaining for civil servants and state employees;
27. welcomes the inclusion in the updated CEPA implementation roadmap of a timeframe extending to 2030 for occupational safety and health (OSH) reforms and calls for its transparent, consistent and accountable implementation, supported by regular consultation with civil society and social partners and by appropriate public monitoring; calls for the ratification of the ILO's Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), and Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187), both of which are fundamental conventions, and urges the country to prioritise ILO technical assistance, and the involvement of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU OSHA), over OSH legislation development in this regard;
28. notes the importance of further strengthening democracy, participation and social justice in the field of labour and social governance, including through measures that effectively protect trade unions from interference and ensure their independent functioning;
29. notes concerns regarding obstacles faced by independent trade union activity in the public and private sectors and encourages effective measures to ensure that trade unions operate on the basis of genuine representation and bargaining mandates, and that dissuasive sanctions against interference in trade union activities are in place in line with ILO Convention 98;
30. calls for further reforms to tackle undeclared and under-declared employment, tax evasion and exploitative labour migration, including loopholes that facilitate abusive recruitment, relocation and informal work; underlines the importance of reform in these areas, including in the framework of VLAP;
31. recognises that sustainable economic development, quality employment and Armenia's long-term competitiveness are increasingly dependent on effective alignment between the education system and the evolving needs of the labour market; in this context, emphasises the importance of strengthening structured and institutionalised cooperation between

employers, trade unions, education institutions and public authorities in the development and implementation of education and skills policies. In line with Armenia's commitments under CEPA and the updated CEPA implementation roadmap, the platform calls for further efforts to be made to ensure that education and training systems are responsive to labour market developments, technological change and economic transformation, and for the European Training Foundation to step up its technical assistance, with the proper involvement of the social partners;

32. encourages the development of reliable labour-market intelligence and skills-forecasting mechanisms, with the active participation of the social partners, in order to better anticipate emerging skills needs and address persistent skills mismatches affecting several sectors of the Armenian economy; further encourages the expansion of effective industry-education partnerships, work-based learning opportunities and apprenticeships, and stronger support for lifelong learning, reskilling and continuous upskilling initiatives, particularly in areas linked to digital transformation, innovation and the green transition;
33. stresses the importance of maintaining a predictable, transparent and enabling business environment that supports enterprise development, investment and job creation; in this context, highlights the need for continued efforts to improve the tax environment for businesses, including by ensuring fairness, transparency and stability in tax policy, reducing administrative burdens and providing equal competitive conditions for all market participants; emphasises that effective tax administration and policies that discourage informality and support the formalisation and sustainable growth of enterprises, particularly SMEs, are essential for strengthening economic resilience; underlines the importance of consulting social partners' organisations in the development and implementation of CEPA-related economic, labour-market and fiscal reforms;
34. welcomes the modernisation of the Law on Employers' Unions to consolidate representation, affirming that a genuine mandate from the business community is essential for constructive participation in CEPA-related reforms and tripartite dialogue;
35. highlights the development of public-private partnership (PPP) mechanisms as useful tools for economic growth and infrastructure modernisation. Considering the increase in the involvement of employers' representatives in public councils attached to ministries and public bodies, the platform notes that purely consultative participation must be translated into systematic procedures for joint public policy development, and encourages the structured participation of employers' representatives across the policy cycle and the provision of reasoned feedback when professional recommendations are not taken on board;

36. emphasises the importance of reforming and modernising public procurement regulations and warns against public service privatisation, which risks worsening labour conditions. Public procurement and PPP contracts should be transparent and publicly accountable and include binding clauses to protect jobs, wages and union rights;
37. welcomes the discussions on the draft new out-of-court mechanism for labour-dispute resolution via a tripartite commission, noting its alignment with social dialogue principles; encourages the government to review its practical functioning, including its geographical coverage and the support provided to social partner representatives, so as to ensure its long-term effectiveness;

On workforce development and green transition

38. highlights workforce shortages across several sectors of the Armenian economy and calls for balanced VET and recruitment policies that combine local workforce development with effective mechanisms for attracting foreign specialists, including transparent and efficient work-permit procedures;
39. emphasises that the green transformation of the economy should support both sustainability objectives and business competitiveness; reiterates the principle of just transition, the need for upskilling and reskilling, efficient social protection and regional development schemes, as well as the proper involvement of all stakeholders, including the workers and communities affected; encourages the development of programmes promoting the adoption of green technologies by enterprises and the active participation of the business community in the development of environmental and sustainability policies;
40. recognises that competitiveness depends on aligning education with labour-market needs; welcomes the 2024 Law on Vocational Education and Training, which combines theoretical and workplace-based learning; stresses that effective implementation requires institutional employer involvement in curriculum development and training; encourages the expansion of industry-education partnerships, work-based learning and upskilling, especially in digital, innovative and green sectors; calls for labour-market intelligence, skills forecasting and appropriate incentive mechanisms to support business participation in student training and help ensure a high-quality workforce that meets market demands;

On business environment, taxation, and regulatory policy

41. stresses the importance of maintaining a predictable, transparent and enabling business environment that supports enterprise development, investment and job creation;

42. calls for continued efforts to ensure that taxation arrangements for SMEs remain proportionate and conducive to formalisation and growth, while avoiding disproportionate administrative and fiscal burdens for smaller businesses;
43. calls for the systematic use of regulatory impact assessment for new legislation, particularly in labour, tax and entrepreneurship, and for the structured involvement of social partners in the policy-making process; welcomes the electronic labour contract system as a tool for transparency and encourages the government to address practical implementation challenges, including for foreign employees and SMEs; emphasises that the digitalisation of public services should reduce bureaucratic burdens and efficiency, and advocates holding workplace consultations with public sector employees and their unions over practical implementation;
44. notes that practical challenges related to visa procedures may affect business mobility and people-to-people contacts, including for representatives of the private sector travelling for legitimate professional purposes; encourages continued efforts, in line with the ongoing Visa Liberalisation Dialogue and applicable EU and Member State procedures, to facilitate mobility, including by improving the transparency, efficiency and accessibility of visa processes for bona fide travellers.