

EU-ARMENIA CIVIL SOCIETY PLATFORM

9th meeting, Brussels, 10 November 2026

JOINT DECLARATION

The EU-Armenia Civil Society Platform (referred to below as the Platform) is one of the bodies set up within the framework of the European Union-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA). It enables civil society organisations (CSOs) from both sides to monitor the implementation process and prepare recommendations for the relevant authorities.

The ninth meeting of the Platform was held on 10 November 2026 in Brussels, Belgium.

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

On EU-Armenia relations and CEPA implementation

1. welcomes the continued deepening of EU-Armenia relations, the first EU-Armenia Summit, held on 5 May 2026, and the Strategic Agenda for the EU-Armenia Partnership adopted in December 2025, which have expanded cooperation in connectivity, economic resilience, mobility, border management and other sectoral areas. At the same time, the Platform stresses that the growing political ambition of the EU-Armenia partnership should be accompanied by tangible and measurable progress in the implementation of CEPA-related domestic reforms;

2. welcomes the additional assistance provided by the European Union to strengthen Armenia's resilience, including in response to external economic pressures, and measures aimed at facilitating Armenian access to the EU market in accordance with applicable EU rules. It stresses the importance of using the current momentum to support economic diversification, resilience, sustainable employment and the application of decent-work standards;

3. while acknowledging the particular political context of 2026, notes with concern that there has still been limited progress on a number of institutional and socio-economic reforms that have been repeatedly addressed in previous joint declarations, and that further progress is needed. It calls on the Armenian authorities, with continued EU support, to pursue the implementation of CEPA commitments as a continuous process and to avoid prolonged interruptions of reform efforts;

4. stresses that achieving lasting CEPA implementation will require more robust internal ministerial governance; encourages the Government of Armenia to strengthen and appropriately resource CEPA implementation capacities across key line ministries and to integrate CEPA approximation targets into annual departmental action plans and medium-term expenditure frameworks, taking account of national administrative arrangements;

5. highlights that recommendations contained in its previous joint declarations remain relevant where they have not yet been implemented. To strengthen the monitoring role of the Platform and avoid repetitive recommendations, it calls for the establishment of a structured follow-up mechanism whereby, ahead of subsequent Platform meetings, relevant authorities provide concise information on measures taken, recommendations still outstanding and next steps planned;

6. emphasises that cooperation between public authorities and civil society organisations should go beyond formal consultation and participation in meetings, to ensure meaningful engagement, due consideration for CSOs' proposals and tangible outcomes from such cooperation;

7. reiterates that meaningful participation by civil society organisations and social partners should constitute an integral part of the design, implementation and monitoring of CEPA-related reforms. Consultation should take place sufficiently early in the policymaking process to allow stakeholders' proposals to influence policy choices and should be accompanied, where appropriate, by transparent feedback on recommendations received;

8. recommends the further development of a publicly accessible digital CEPA implementation dashboard featuring proportionate output and outcome indicators, clear sectoral baselines and regular progress updates, building where possible on existing EU-Armenia monitoring arrangements; emphasises that such a portal could provide a shared factual basis for monitoring by the Civil Society Platform, government bodies and EU institutions;

On the rule of law, human rights and anti-corruption

9. calls for faster and more efficient implementation of judicial and legal, human rights, anti-corruption and public administration reforms, in line with established commitments and deadlines;

10. expresses concern about allegations of excessive use of force by police and calls for prompt, impartial and effective investigations into alleged human rights violations by law-enforcement authorities, with accountability where violations are identified;

11. calls for safeguards against selective application of justice and unjustified pre-trial detention, emphasising equality before the law, due process, and deprivation of liberty as a measure of last resort;

12. emphasises that freedom of expression must be fully safeguarded as a cornerstone of democracy and human rights protection, and calls for criminal proceedings not to be brought against individuals solely for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression. The Platform stresses that any restrictions on expression must comply with the requirements of legality, necessity and proportionality under applicable international human rights standards and must not be used to silence criticism or suppress dissent;

13. stresses that strengthening judicial independence requires clear, merit-based and transparent procedures for the selection, appointment, evaluation, and promotion of judges; calls on the Supreme Judicial Council to ensure full public transparency in disciplinary proceedings and judge selection; urges the Armenian authorities to refine judge integrity verification (vetting) mechanisms in close consultation with the Venice Commission and civil society, ensuring due process and avoiding political interference;

14. reiterates the necessity of safeguarding the operational independence, adequate resourcing and inter-institutional coordination of Armenia's specialised anti-corruption infrastructure – specifically the Corruption Prevention Commission, the Anti-Corruption Committee and the Anti-Corruption Court;

15. calls for the effective implementation and regular review of the public asset declaration framework, effective and legally sound asset recovery mechanisms, and the enforcement of whistleblower protection legislation, including confidential reporting channels and robust safeguards against retaliation, fully respecting due process and fundamental rights;

16. expresses concern over reports of excessive force, ill-treatment and impunity within law enforcement agencies; calls for prompt, thorough and independent investigation of alleged violations, effective independent oversight and continued police reform; encourages proportionate use of body-worn cameras, de-escalation training and transparent publication of disciplinary statistics, with appropriate data-protection safeguards;

17. emphasises that digital transformation of the justice sector is a vital tool for anti-corruption and efficiency; calls for the full implementation of a unified E-Justice system, including automated, non-manipulable court case distribution algorithms, public online registries of judicial decisions, and digital filing systems across all court tiers to minimise administrative discretion and enhance public access to justice;

18. notes the importance of assessing the results and impact of the 2023–2026 Anti-Corruption Strategy; refers to OECD monitoring findings on the subject concerning the need for outcome-level indicators, transparent reporting, adequate budgeting and sustained implementation; calls on the authorities to address any outstanding recommendations and publish measurable results;

19. stresses the importance of strengthening public accountability for anti-corruption reforms through transparent reporting that goes beyond activities undertaken and provides a clear assessment of implementation progress, measurable outcomes and actual impact; calls for effective and timely implementation of commitments under anti-corruption and other related strategies;

20. similarly, notes that the same OECD 2025 report identified regression in the performance of the judicial system, including the specialised anti-corruption court system, and underlines the need to address the identified institutional weaknesses and strengthen the effective functioning of the judiciary;

21. calls for tangible progress in reviewing the legal framework for the forfeiture of assets of illicit origin, taking account of the Venice Commission's opinion, the Constitutional Court's decision, due process and property-rights safeguards; calls for transparency regarding the status of amendments and any plans for an asset recovery and confiscation office;

On employment, social rights and health

22. notes that, although the Tripartite Commission was established under the Republican Collective Agreement, its work has so far remained insufficient and has not produced visible results. The Platform stresses that effective social dialogue requires continuous and meaningful engagement between the government and social partners, supported by clear, results-oriented goals and effective follow-up to agreed commitments. It therefore encourages the authorities and social partners to ensure the regular functioning of the Tripartite Commission, meaningful participation in labour and social policymaking, and the effective implementation of Armenia's obligations under ILO Conventions Nos 151 and 154, as well as other relevant ILO instruments;

23. emphasises that engagement between state authorities and representative employer organisations within ministerial councils, parliamentary committees and public councils must shift from a purely ad hoc or consultative format into a systemic process for joint policy formulation, supported by mandatory feedback mechanisms that require public bodies to provide reasoned justifications whenever professional recommendations are not adopted;

24. calls for sufficiently early, transparent and inclusive public consultations on business and labour-related draft legislation, normally allowing at least 20 working days, accompanied by reasoned feedback on substantive proposals from representative social partners and other stakeholders;

25. reiterates that the legal recognition of collective bargaining must be accompanied by conditions allowing this right to be exercised effectively in practice. It calls for reforms that promote genuine and good-faith collective bargaining between employers and trade unions and, in particular, for the establishment of a clear institutional counterpart and procedures enabling public-service employees and their trade unions to exercise collective bargaining and consultation rights effectively;

26. acknowledges the importance of the Health and Labour Inspection Body but remains concerned that the existing institutional and legal framework does not provide sufficiently effective mechanisms for identifying, preventing and remedying labour-law violations. It calls for labour inspection to be strengthened by means of adequate staffing and resources, proactive and risk-based inspection powers, appropriate possibilities for unannounced inspections, protection of complainants' confidentiality, effective detection of undeclared employment and other forms of employment without legally required employment contracts and of wage under-declaration, and proportionate and dissuasive enforcement measures. Furthermore, the Platform calls for an appropriate legal framework enabling competent authorities to inspect working conditions in digital platform work, identify potentially disguised employment relationships and ensure the enforcement of applicable labour protections. Such reforms should give practical effect to Armenia's obligations under ILO Convention No 81 on Labour Inspection;

27. remains concerned about serious and fatal workplace accidents, particularly in the construction sector, and the remaining gaps in Armenia's occupational safety and health framework. While recognising ongoing reform efforts, it reiterates the need to accelerate the establishment of a comprehensive OSH system, strengthen preventive labour inspection and move towards ratification and effective implementation of ILO Conventions Nos 155 and 187;

28. takes note of the amendments to Armenia's Law on Foreigners scheduled to enter into force on 1 November 2026, including measures intended to reduce the misuse of migration and residence procedures for employment purposes. It stresses, however, that migration-control measures alone cannot address undeclared employment, abusive recruitment, trafficking risks or exploitation of migrant workers. The Platform calls for closer coordination between migration, border-management, labour, law-enforcement and inspection authorities, combined with effective workplace enforcement and greater transparency and accountability in recruitment and job advertising, with due regard for migrants' fundamental rights. it calls for safeguards in platform work against employment misclassification and opaque algorithmic management, drawing on ILO guidance and EU Directive 2024/2831;

29. calls for transparent, simplified and digitally accessible procedures enabling employers and migrant workers to regularise employment relationships without unnecessary administrative barriers, while ensuring effective protection against abusive recruitment, forced labour and exploitation;

30. welcomes the objective of achieving universal access to healthcare through the introduction of universal health insurance. At the same time, it notes concerns that have emerged during the initial stages of implementation regarding the distribution of financing burdens, affordability and predictability of co-payments, clarity of coverage for complex medical interventions, and effective access to prescribed medicines. It calls for continuous assessment of the reform in consultation with social partners and civil society, greater transparency of the benefit package and co-payment rules, more robust protection against excessive out-of-pocket expenditure, and measures to ensure equitable and effective access to medicines and healthcare services;

31. draws attention to the environmental protection, public health and chemicals-management commitments made under CEPA. The Platform calls for stronger pesticide regulation, better monitoring and a One Health approach integrating human, animal and environmental health. These measures can also support sustainable agricultural production and facilitate Armenian agricultural exports to the EU in compliance with applicable EU sanitary and phytosanitary requirements;

32. calls for agricultural workers to be better protected from pesticide exposure and for trade unions and civil society to be meaningfully involved in policymaking. It encourages Armenia and the EU to step up cooperation and social dialogue to promote occupational safety, responsible pesticide use and sustainable agriculture;

33. highlights workforce shortages across key production and service sectors; calls for reliable labour-market forecasting, closer alignment of vocational education and training (VET) with labour-market needs through institutionalised participation of employers and trade unions, and transparent and efficient work-permit procedures for foreign specialists; encourages representative sectoral skills councils to help define occupational standards, update VET curricula and improve qualifications frameworks; further calls for measures supporting work-based learning and apprenticeships, a comprehensive lifelong learning strategy and recognition of non-formal and informal learning, drawing on relevant European qualifications principles, to facilitate adult reskilling in digital, green and industrial competencies and improve the employability of vulnerable jobseekers, women and displaced persons;

34. welcomes efforts to improve pension adequacy and modernise Armenia's social protection system, while calling for careful assessment of any proposed restrictions on existing social protection guarantees, with attention to vulnerable groups; stresses that improvements in one area of social security should not come at the expense of essential protections in another;

35. in the context of Armenia's closer cooperation with the EU, encourages the development of transparent, evidence-based and regularly reviewed minimum-wage setting arrangements, drawing where appropriate on principles reflected in the EU framework on adequate minimum wages; calls for meaningful participation of social partners, stronger collective bargaining and measures to reduce in-work poverty;

36. welcomes the launch of the EU-supported Clean Air for Health and Green Growth in Armenia initiative and acknowledges recent efforts to strengthen the national air-quality regulatory framework. At the same time, it notes with concern persistent shortcomings in air-quality monitoring, public access to reliable environmental information, and effective control of pollution sources. The Platform encourages the Armenian authorities, with EU technical support and meaningful civil society involvement, to accelerate the implementation of CEPA-related air-quality commitments, ensure the timely operation of monitoring and public warning systems, and strengthen enforcement of emission-control requirements, particularly in transport, construction and industrial activities;

37. underlines the importance of implementing Armenia's commitments under the Paris Agreement and advancing climate objectives, taking account of relevant EU Green Deal developments; encourages Armenian industries and authorities to prepare for applicable EU Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) requirements and relevant EU sustainability rules, according to their respective scope and implementation timelines;

38. calls on the Armenian Government and the European Union to establish dedicated technical assistance facilities and green financing mechanisms to support corporate carbon accounting, energy efficiency, and industrial decarbonisation, ensuring that climate compliance enhances rather than hinders Armenian export competitiveness; reiterates that energy transition and energy security are interdependent pillars of Armenia's sustainable development;

39. calls for investment to be accelerated in renewable energy generation, modern energy storage systems and smart grid infrastructure, alongside the expansion of national energy-efficiency programmes across public, industrial, and residential sectors; stresses that it is imperative to maintain the highest levels of nuclear safety and environmental risk management at the Armenian Nuclear Power Plant (ANPP) in full compliance with IAEA standards and CEPA commitments;

40. takes note of concerns raised by civil society regarding the Amulsar gold mine, including potential impacts on water resources, biodiversity and public health, and of the findings and recommendations of earlier environmental assessments and relevant international bodies; calls on the Armenian authorities to ensure that any mining activity complies with applicable national law and international environmental commitments, that environmental impact assessments are independent, up to date and publicly accessible, and that affected communities and civil society are meaningfully consulted; calls for appropriate precautionary and enforcement measures where material environmental risks or legal non-compliance are identified;

41. emphasises that growing water scarcity, inefficient irrigation and unmanaged municipal waste pose serious threats to Armenia's agricultural productivity and public health; calls for progressive approximation to relevant EU water-management principles, including integrated river-basin management, modernised irrigation networks and expanded municipal wastewater treatment infrastructure, in line with CEPA commitments;

42. further urges the institutionalisation of extended producer responsibility (EPR) and circular economy frameworks to modernise municipal and industrial waste management nationwide;

43. stresses that long-term environmental protection requires structural reform of national environmental impact assessment (EIA) and strategic environmental assessment (SEA) frameworks;

44. calls on the Armenian authorities to further approximate national EIA legislation to relevant EU directives and implement obligations under the Aarhus Convention, ensuring early-stage public consultations, effective and independent environmental oversight and access to justice for civil society and affected local communities;

On economic reforms, the business environment and formalisation

45. stresses the importance of maintaining a predictable, transparent, and stable economic and tax policy that directly encourages business investment, job creation, and long-term economic resilience under the CEPA implementation roadmap;

46. takes note of and welcomes the tripartite policy dialogue, supported by the International Labour Organization, on the transition from the informal to the formal economy, and the resulting tripartite recommendations; emphasises that formalisation should be treated as a comprehensive economic-development objective supporting productivity, fair competition, investment, quality employment, social protection and the sustainable growth of enterprises;

47. calls on the Government of Armenia to develop a coordinated policy framework for the transition from the informal to the formal economy, combining proportionate and risk-based enforcement with incentives, guidance and simplified compliance procedures; emphasises that formalisation policies should be based on reliable data and measurable targets and should contribute to fair competition, enterprise productivity, quality employment and adequate social protection;

48. reiterates the importance of a stable, predictable and proportionate tax environment that supports the transition of enterprises into the formal economy and enables their sustainable growth; calls for simplified and transparent transitions between tax regimes, the avoidance of abrupt regulatory or fiscal thresholds that discourage enterprise growth, reasonable adaptation periods for significant changes and timely guidance for businesses before new requirements enter into force;

49. calls for the systematic and transparent application of regulatory impact assessment and of an effective 'SME Test' to draft legislation affecting taxation, employment, entrepreneurship and administrative compliance;

50. recommends strengthening independent and transparent quality review of regulatory impact assessments and SME tests, with meaningful involvement from representative business organisations and social partners, to evaluate cumulative compliance costs, regional and sectoral effects and the potential impact of proposed measures on business formalisation; calls for the publication of results and reasoned responses to stakeholder proposals before adoption of relevant legislation;

51. calls for the transition from the informal to the formal economy to be integrated as a measurable priority in Armenia's SME Development Strategy and related implementation programmes. This should include a specific action plan addressing the needs of enterprises in the regions and sectors with a high prevalence of informality, as well as indicators measuring not only the number of registered enterprises but also enterprise survival, productivity, employment formalisation and sustainable growth;

52. encourages sector-specific formalisation measures in areas where informality and undeclared work remain particularly widespread or are taking on new forms, including construction, agriculture, hospitality, retail trade, domestic and care work, transport, platform-based activities and the employment of migrant workers. Such measures should be developed on the basis of sectoral evidence and consultation with representative employers' organisations and other relevant stakeholders;

53. calls for simplified and proportionate tax and administrative procedures for SMEs, without exemptions from labour or social protection obligations, taking account of their operational capacities, reducing compliance burdens and incentivising the transition from the informal to the formal economy while preserving fair competition and sustainable public revenues;

54. recommends modernising Armenia's public procurement framework in line with CEPA commitments, including appropriate use of the most economically advantageous tender criteria, while preserving transparency, equal treatment, competition, value for money, respect for labour rights and collective agreements, and due diligence throughout subcontracting chains;

55. calls for the integration of green, quality, energy-efficiency and social compliance criteria into public tenders, thereby enabling formal, sustainable, and innovative Armenian enterprises to compete effectively for public contracts;

56. emphasises that green economic transition policies must safeguard enterprise competitiveness; calls for direct financial, fiscal, and technical incentive programmes that assist Armenian enterprises in adopting green technologies, improving energy efficiency, and meeting EU market sustainability standards;

57. encourages the European Union and other international partners to continue providing technical and financial support for economic reforms, SME development, regulatory approximation, digital transformation, export capacity and the implementation of effective formalisation policies in Armenia;

58. underlines that unlocking the full potential of EU market access for Armenian goods requires accelerating the alignment of national quality infrastructure with EU standards;

59. calls for targeted investment and capacity building in national accreditation bodies and metrology, conformity assessment and testing laboratories, alongside modernised sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) inspection systems, to enable Armenian SMEs, particularly in agri-food and manufacturing, to meet applicable EU market requirements, including CE marking only for products to which that regime applies;

60. highlights that high borrowing costs, strict collateral requirements, and limited access to risk capital remain major bottlenecks for SME growth and formalisation;

61. encourages consideration of expanded credit guarantee, equity and venture-financing instruments, and appropriate blended-finance facilities in cooperation with the EU and international financial institutions (IFIs), subject to available resources, relevant eligibility criteria and agreed programming priorities, to improve access to finance for innovative and greening micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, with respect for applicable IFI environmental, labour and social safeguards, including subcontractor due diligence;

62. calls for the digital transformation of government-to-business (G2B) services to be accelerated through unified electronic licensing, digital tax filing, automated e-invoicing, and streamlined corporate registration;

63. stresses that e-governance solutions should be designed with accessible interfaces for micro and regional enterprises, reducing administrative compliance costs and supporting economic formalisation;

64. calls on the Armenian Customs Service and EU partner authorities to accelerate the digitalisation of customs procedures through a fully operational National Single Window for foreign trade;

65. encourages the further development of Armenia's Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) scheme, with a view to exploring possible future mutual recognition with the EU subject to the relevant legal and technical conditions, thereby helping to reduce customs clearance times, lower logistical costs and enhance supply-chain security for compliant trading enterprises.
