



PARLIAMENTARY FORUM  
FOR DEMOCRACY

## Vilnius Declaration

International Parliamentary Meeting

*State of Democracy around the Globe: Current Challenges and Future Prospects*  
on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the restoration of Lithuania's Independence

9–10 March 2015

Vilnius

We, the participants of the International Parliamentary Meeting *State of Democracy around the Globe: Current Challenges and Future Prospects*, gathered in Vilnius on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the restoration of Lithuania's Independence,

**recalling** that the Parliamentary Forum for Democracy adopted the following declarations, resolutions and other documents: Vilnius Declaration setting up the Community of Democracies Parliamentary Forum (2010), Resolution on the nomination of Liu Xiaobo for the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize (2010), Resolution on the situation in Georgia (2010), Resolution calling for support of Cuba's pro-democracy movement (2010), Final resolution of Parliamentary Forum Krakow Meeting (2010), Resolution calling for improvement of the political and civil society situation in Belarus (2010), Resolution calling for improvement of the political situation in Ukraine (2010), and Resolution calling for support of Cuba's pro-democracy movement (2010), Tbilisi Declaration (2011), Vilnius Declaration (2011), Resolution on Cuba (2011), Resolution on elections in Thailand (Vilnius), Resolution on Freedom for Aung San Suu Kyi (Vilnius), Resolution on Yemeni People (2011), Resolution on Libyan Transitional National Council (2011), Resolution on the situation in Belarus (2011), Resolution on suppression of Syrian People (2011), Resolution on women in strengthening democracy (2011), Resolution on Tymoshenko (2012), Vilnius Declaration (2012), Washington Declaration (2011), Parliamentary Forum for Democracy Resolution (2013), Statement of the members of the Parliamentary Forum for Democracy on the course of the Europe Eastern Partnership Programme and the hopes of Ukrainians (2013), Conclusions of the Meeting of the Chairpersons of the Committees on Foreign Affairs of Parliaments of the European Union and the Parliamentary Forum for Democracy during the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of Europe (2013), and PFD members' Statement on the Eve of an Eventual Big War in the Eastern Europe (2014);

**recognizing** democracy as a universally recognized ideal as well as a goal which is based on the common values shared by multitude of people around the world;

**emphasizing** our common belief that duly elected parliaments embody democracy as the central institutions which express the will of people, pass laws and to which governments are accountable;

***expressing*** our common adherence to the fundamental values and principles set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Agenda for Democratization presented by the UN Secretary-General to the 51st session of the United Nations General Assembly and other relevant instruments of international law;

***expressing*** our full support to the objectives set forth in the Warsaw Declaration establishing the Community of Democracies and its subsequent declarations and documents;

***recognizing*** the Act of 11 March, adopted by the members of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Lithuania, as a symbol of the victory of democracy over the foreign authoritarian regime;

***recognizing*** the common and fundamental elements vital for any genuine democracy as stated in the Warsaw Declaration (2010), though emphasizing that democratization must be pursued bearing in mind the diversity of experience and cultural background of every country striving for democracy;

***emphasizing*** the importance of the forthcoming 15th anniversary of the Community of Democracies;

***recalling*** the recent Meeting of the Governing Council of the Community of Democracies in Geneva which focused on the global situation of civil society, the status of freedom of association in the world, the status of freedom of opinion and expression and of human rights defenders;

***welcoming*** the establishment of the Youth Dimension of the Community of Democracies during the Lithuanian Presidency in 2010 as an official pillar for ensuring youth representation at every level of the Community of Democracies, including ministerial and working group meetings,

**have agreed to:**

***stress*** the crucial role of individuals leading the striving of nations for democracy, such as Mr Jemilev, a former political prisoner and the current advocate for freedom for Crimean Tatars in Crimea occupied by Russia, Mr Landsbergis, an inspirer of Lithuania's quarter-century transformation, and the late Mr Boris Nemtsov, who died for true democracy in Russia;

***congratulate*** Tunisia for its contribution to the spread of democracy in the Arab World and for setting an example and staying on course for freedom. The Freedom House has listed Tunisia as a free country; the first and the only Arab country to be acknowledged as a free Arab country since 1975;

***acknowledge*** the significance of partnering with civil society and youth organizations in order to provide them opportunities for dialogue;

***note*** that military occupation and illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia, as well as unprovoked war of Russia against Ukraine waged directly and indirectly through mercenaries and terrorists pose a serious threat to the system of international law, security and stability in the region and Europe as well as to universal democratic values and human rights;

***express*** concern over continued reports of deepening of retribution, political prosecution and selective justice in Georgia, particularly, the use of pre-trial detention against political leaders;

**point** out the recent rise of anti-Semitism in Europe, which culminated in horrific terror acts, such as shootings at the Jewish Museum of Belgium in 2014 or Toulouse and Montauban shootings, when even schoolchildren were targeted, or the recent attack in Copenhagen and shootings in a kosher shop in Paris;

**express** worries regarding the methods of authoritarian leaders to label the political opposition, dissidents and unfavored ethnic and religious minorities as "terrorists" to delegitimize and repress them;

**note** that the world today is witnessing the whole range of alarming trends from the rebirth of revisionism and indulgence in power games to open military actions and from the rise of radical movements to outrageous terrorist acts. In the face of threats to international law and order it becomes important for states and societies to counter the negative and remain true to the fundamental democracy values, human rights and freedoms and gender equality, and to prevent the shrinking of democratic space and reverse these trends;

**call** on all parties to the Minsk Agreement to fully implement it, stressing, in particular, the responsibility of Russia in this matter, notably in ceasing its support to the so-called separatists, withdrawing its fighters, mercenaries, troops and armaments from Ukraine's territory and creating conditions for the re-establishment of control by Ukraine of its international border with Russia, currently under OSCE control, and releasing all the prisoners, including Ms Savchenko, Ukrainian MP and a PACE member;

**call** on the Community of Democracies to nominate the late Mr B. Nemtsov as an outstanding Russian opposition leader for the 2015 Geremek Award for Outstanding Achievements in Democracy Support to be bestowed at the ministerial meeting in San Salvador, thereby recognizing his efforts in the development of democracy, peace and implementation of human rights;

**call** on the Community of Democracies to consider organizing a high level democracy meeting in Kyiv as an acknowledgment of significant democratic achievements in Eastern Europe, notably in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, and due to the recent development in Ukraine;

**call** on the Georgian government to adhere to its own international commitments and universally shared standards of democratic political competition;

**call** on the Egyptians to stop the violence, encourage the Egyptian government to fight against terrorism and call for reconciliation, starting of political dialogue inside Egypt and working very quickly on promoting electoral law ensuring equal opportunities for all Egyptian citizens to run for the elections and guaranteeing a quota and executive positions for women in the next parliament;

**call** for releasing human rights activists who are in jail, such as Ahmed Meher, Alla Abd El Fatah, Ahmed Domah, Yara Salam and Sana Abd El Fatah, with the presidential initiative from President Sisi;

**call** on the democratic powers around the world to continue their effort to strengthen cooperation for the sake of democracy;

**help** those who are fighting to create democracy or are opposing backsliding from democracy;

**note** the need for solidarity, first, among the democracies like those of the Community of Democracies and, second, within civil society and opposition forces in countries like Belarus;

***encourage*** participation in the activities of the Community of Democracies by all young civil society activists and organizations which promote democratic principles;

***educate*** the youth about democratic principles and practices and promote youth involvement in decision-making and policy-making processes;

***reach*** out and encourage young people to get involved with democracy promotion, active citizenship and political activities.