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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)
Astrid Thors, OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities
Rita Izsák, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues
Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples

29 August 2016

Statement
by the Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum
on the persecution of Ilmi Umerov endangering his life

Ilmi Umerov, the deputy head of the Mejlis, the main representative organ of the Indigenous Crimean Tatar people was detained on 12 May 2016 following the interview he gave the ATR TV channel on 19 March 2016 in Kyiv. He is charged with “separatism” under Article 280.1 – a new article introduced a few months after Russia’s invasion and illegal annexation of Crimea. His main “crime” consists of stating that Russia must leave Crimea and that the peninsula must be returned to Ukraine – a view shared by all democratic states and international organizations.

During a hearing in Kyiv District Court of Simferopol on 11 August, Ilmi Umerov suffered a heart attack and was hospitalised to a coronary care unit. Meanwhile, the court ruled that he must be placed in a psychiatric clinic for examination. On 18 August he was taken against his will to Psychiatric Hospital No. 1 in Simferopol to be held there for 28 days. Mr Umerov has a number of health problems, and his condition sharply deteriorated on 21 August. At the moment his life is in danger and his lawyer Mark Feygin says that ill treatment of Ilmi Umerov in effect amounts to torture.

Taking into account this critical situation and the immediate threat to Ilmi Umerov's life we:

- condemn the return by Russia to the worst Soviet practices of punitive psychiatry, which targeted dissidents;
- believe that the *de facto* authorities of Crimea must drop all charges against Ilmi Umerov and other political prisoners from Crimea held in custody on the territory of Crimea and in Russia;
- demand the immediate release of Ilmi Umerov;
- appeal for the support and active engagement of the democratic international community.

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