

The EU-Azerbaijan Parliamentary Cooperation Committee
Fourteenth meeting
2-3 May 2017, Brussels

FINAL STATEMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Pursuant to Article 88 of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement

Under the co-chairmanship of Mr. Sajjad Karim, on behalf of the European Parliament, and of Mr. Javanshir Feyziyev, on behalf of the Milli Mejlis of Azerbaijan, the 14th meeting of the EU-Azerbaijan Parliamentary Cooperation Committee (PCC) was held in Brussels on 2-3 May 2017.

The Parliamentary Cooperation Committee, having considered the state of play of EU-Azerbaijan relations, agreed upon the following final statement and recommendations.

The Parliamentary Cooperation Committee:

1. Notes with satisfaction the resumption of relations between the European Parliament and the Milli Mejlis in 2016. Both sides highly appreciate the active engagement of two parliaments in consolidating and deepening of existing dialogue which paves a way for more constructive relations in future.
2. Welcomes the opening of the negotiations on the new comprehensive agreement on relations between the EU and Azerbaijan. The new agreement will follow the principles endorsed in the 2015 review of the European Neighbourhood Policy and offer a renewed legal basis for enhanced political dialogue and mutually beneficial cooperation between the EU and Azerbaijan.
3. Expects the new agreement to include a stronger parliamentary dimension, strengthening the current provisions and mechanisms of cooperation. Regular meetings of legislators on both sides can provide valuable input for the implementation of the future agreement, monitoring the progress of this process and providing recommendations for further steps. PCC expects to be duly updated throughout the negotiation process.
4. Exchanged views on the political situation in Azerbaijan in the area of political dialogue and reforms. Open and constructive dialogue on issues surrounding the protection of human rights and freedoms, the situation of civil society and its involvement in the reform process, and the level of democracy and rule of law in the country, also in cases of diverging views on both sides, leading to concrete follow up on the highlighted areas of concern, reinforces mutual understanding and paves the way for closer relations between the EU and Azerbaijan. Progress in this area is important also in the context of the new agreement under negotiation.
5. Stresses the need to find a peaceful and lasting settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict as soon as possible, and urges the OSCE Minsk Group Co-chairs to intensify their engagement for achieving a solution of the conflict in accordance with international law and in line with the OSCE Minsk Group Basic Principles, enshrined in the L'Aquila joint statement of 10 July 2009; urges to ensure that the rights of persons displaced due to the conflict are respected; reiterates the full support to the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Azerbaijan, as stated in the European Parliament resolutions of 23 October 2013 and 9 July 2015 and UN Security Council Resolutions 822, 853, 874 and 884 of 1993.

6. Calls the members of both the European Parliament and the Milli Mejlis of Azerbaijan to support the peaceful solution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and refrain from steps causing escalation of violence and hostilities in the region; welcomes the continued efforts to promote people-to-people contacts, such as creation of the Platform for Peace between the civil societies of Armenia and Azerbaijan and the European Partnership for the Peaceful Settlement of the Conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh (EPNK).
7. Stresses the importance of the Southern Gas Corridor, which will solidify and boost the EU-Azerbaijan strategic energy partnership. Southern Gas Corridor of which Azerbaijan remains enabler and key contributor also presents economic opportunities for the countries along its route. It also increases the energy security of the EU by contributing to the diversification of the sources and routes of supply of gas.
8. Underlines the great potential of closer economic relations between EU and Azerbaijan. EU is Azerbaijan's biggest trade partner and accounts for the largest share of foreign direct investment. While the energy sector provides a large share of revenues, diversification and modernisation remains important in ensuring sustainable long-term growth of the economy.
9. Recognises the geographical location of Azerbaijan both as a challenge and as an opportunity to act as a gateway, also in relations with the EU. The PCC discussed the efforts of Azerbaijan to have a balanced foreign and economic policy and its engagement with its partners in the region in different formats.
10. Reaffirms the role of the PCC as the forum of open, respectful and constructive exchange and endeavours to take further steps towards making this body more efficient and visible.