

Foreign affairs MEPs to visit South Caucasus

A Foreign Affairs Committee delegation, led by its Chair David McAllister (EPP, DE), will travel to Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia on 22-25 May to meet the Presidents, Speakers, parliamentarians from the ruling as well as opposition parties and civil society representatives. The 8 Members of the European Parliament are to take stock of a recent deal on a new EU-Armenia agreement, the advancement of negotiations on a new EU-Azerbaijan agreement and the deepening of EU-Georgia relations.

Ahead of the visit Mr. McAllister said: "My colleagues and I are very much looking forward to our visit to Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia next week. This is a region of great importance for the European Union and a major counterpart to our Eastern Partnership policy. We share many interests, notably in terms of promoting peace, security and trade, and we also seek to uphold our values – especially democracy, rule of law, good governance, human rights and fundamental freedoms – as we seek to further deepen our partnerships."

In addition to Mr. McAllister, the EP's delegation will be composed of seven MEPs: Mr. László Tókes (EPP, HU), Ms. Željana Zovko (EPP, HR), Mr. Andrejs Mamikins (S&D, LV), Mr. Angel Dzhambazki (ECR, BG), Mr. Ivo Vajgl (ALDE, SL), Mr. Helmut Scholz (GUE/NGL, DE) and, representing the interparliamentary delegation, Ms. Heidi Hautala (Greens, FI).

The delegation is planning to visit Azerbaijan on 22 May and meet the authorities including President Ilham Aliyev, the Chairman of the Milli Mejlis Ogtay Asadov and parliamentarians as well as with civil society representatives. On 23 May, the MEPs will head to Georgia to meet President Giorgi Margvelashvili, Prime Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili, the Speaker Irakli Kobakhidze, civil society organisations and to visit the EU monitoring mission (EUMM Georgia) in Mtskheta on 24 May. The EP's delegation is to finish its mission in Armenia on 25 May with meetings with President Serzh Sargsyan, the Speaker of the National Assembly and a visit of an EU funded field project.

The EU is currently reshaping its relationship with Armenia and Azerbaijan through new agreements for which the negotiations have just ended (Armenia) or just started (Azerbaijan). The MEPs' visit will feed into the European Parliament's report and recommendation on these agreements to be drawn up later this year.

Press conferences:

(All times and locations are subject to change, please contact the press officers in Baku, Tbilisi and Yerevan).

In Baku, Azerbaijan, on Monday 22 May at 13:00 at the Milli Mejlis with Foreign Affairs Committee Chair David McAllister.

In Tbilisi, Georgia, Wednesday 24 May at 09:45 at the Marriott hotel with Foreign Affairs Committee Chair David McAllister.

In Yerevan, Armenia, Thursday 25 May at 18:15 at the Armenia Marriott Hotel with Foreign Affairs Committee Chair David McAllister.

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