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*Delegation to the EU-Armenia Parliamentary Partnership Committee,  
the EU-Azerbaijan Parliamentary Cooperation Committee  
and the EU-Georgia Parliamentary Association Committee*

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## STATEMENT

**BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE DELEGATION, MEP Sajjad KARIM**

**on the event “2018: A Landmark for the South Caucasus”**

**which took place on the premises of the European Parliament on 28 November 2018**

**Brussels, 29 November 2018** - “Yesterday night’s event was a great success and it was truly an honour for a lot of the people that I have worked side-by-side with over the years to come together as they did to celebrate our South Caucasus related achievements.

“What I originally took on as a job, genuinely has led to a very different place today where I feel that through the EU, we genuinely have managed to reach out through this Parliament and our sister institutions, in a way that is actually a fine example of how the EU can really add value. Not just on behalf of Member States and our citizens, but on behalf of citizens in countries with whom we are building our relations.

“Indeed, we have a number of celebrations in the South Caucasus this year. Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia have all had centenary celebrations of one form or another and all demonstrate the genuine value they place on their independence, on their sovereignty and on their genuine desire and wish to set a path for their people to do things in their own way, and that really has been one of the binding things in the EP delegation.

“So many of my friends and colleagues who attended last night: Andreas Mamikins MEP, Claire Moody MEP, Ramona Mănescu MEP, among others, have played a vital role in their own style and in their own unique way that has allowed us to interact with our partners within

the region on a point of mutual respect, and indeed, understanding, and there really has been a need for understanding along this journey - there's no doubt about that.

“One of the things that I learned very early on from the interactions that I had, was the tremendous challenges and threats that all three of these countries have to face on a daily basis, simply because of their geography. We see that these forces are reaching out with their tentacles on a much more pervasive basis than I think any of us in Western Europe could have imagined. So in that sense, we have a tremendous amount still to learn from these three countries.

“None of this would have been possible though without the help of my South Caucasus counterparts, Co-Chairs Armen Ashotyan, Tamar Khulordava and Javanshir Feyziyev, as well as Ambassadors Tatoul Markarian, Natalie Sabanadze and Fuad Isgandarov who have been essential interlocutors for me and tremendously supportive throughout the years. Without them, neither their countries interest could have been served in the way they have done so, nor could our delegation on behalf of the EP have achieved anything for our partners in the way that we have.

“I must also thank my colleagues at the Commission and EEAS, Luc Devigne, Vassilis Maragos and Lawrence Meredith - to name a few - who have provided invaluable assistance during my tenure. We managed to establish great working relations between all our sister institutions, demonstrating that our delegation is a great example of how co-working should happen and I hope that it will continue way beyond my mandate.”

*For further information contact:*

*Office of Mr Sajjad KARIM, tel. +32 2 284 56 40, e-mail: [sajjad.karim@ep.europa.eu](mailto:sajjad.karim@ep.europa.eu)*

*Eastern Partnership and Russia Unit, tel. +32 2 284 26 43, e-mail: [DSCA@ep.europa.eu](mailto:DSCA@ep.europa.eu)*