



EU-Armenia Parliamentary Partnership Committee

**Joint statement by the Co-Chairs of the
EU-Armenia Parliamentary Partnership Committee
MEP Marina KALJURAND and MP Arman YEGHOYAN**

on the 2nd meeting of the EU-Armenia Parliamentary Partnership Committee

Yerevan, 24 February 2022 – *“The European Parliament and the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia held the second meeting of the EU-Armenia Parliamentary Partnership Committee (PPC) on 24 February 2022 in Yerevan, marking a strong commitment to the deepening of relations between the EU and Armenia.*

This was the first meeting since the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) entered into force in March last year and an occasion for us to review the state of its implementation. We welcome the progress made and encourage the Armenian authorities to continue on the reform path. We also note the substantial EU support provided, such as in the crucial area of justice reform.

We applaud the fact that the EU's Economic and Investment Plan will provide a sizable stimulus to investments in key areas, including strategically important connectivity projects and support to the most vulnerable regions, and appreciate the EU's efforts to help Armenia deal with the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The recent signing of the Common Aviation Area Agreement in November marks a significant step with tangible benefits for the citizens and businesses of both the EU and Armenia. Enhanced connectivity helps boost people-to-people contacts as well as economic growth. Among other concrete steps to achieve tangible results, we also welcomed the recent agreement on Armenia's association status to the Horizon Europe research and innovation programme and the agreement on strategic cooperation with Europol.

We appreciated that despite the difficult context created by the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War and the COVID-19 pandemic, the early parliamentary elections of June 2021 were competitive and generally well-managed, living up to democratic standards. They also delivered a clear mandate for the Government of Armenia to further reform the country, improve governance, tackle corruption and modernise the economy. We stressed the need to decrease polarisation in politics and called on all political forces to show restraint. We also highlighted the importance of ensuring that all reforms respect the principles of separation of powers and the rule of law and recommended seeking and following advice of the Venice Commission on all constitutional matters.

We reiterated our unwavering support to a comprehensive and peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and to the process within the mandate of the OSCE

Minsk Group Co-Chairmanship, based on the principles of non-use of force, territorial integrity and the equal rights and self-determination of peoples.

We appreciate the engagement of the President of the European Council in order to help create an atmosphere of trust and build confidence, including through the creation of a direct communication link between the Ministers of Defence of Armenia and Azerbaijan and the EU's mediation to repatriate detained Armenian servicemen. We encourage stepping up the EU's involvement to help address urgent outstanding issues, such as the return of all remaining Armenian prisoners of war and other detainees, the protection of cultural heritage in the conflict area, and the unblocking of humanitarian access to Nagorno-Karabakh.

We find it unacceptable that on 12 May 2021, troops from Azerbaijan temporarily entered the territory of Armenia, which amounts to a violation of the territorial integrity of Armenia and of international law. Further progress on border delimitation and demarcation between Armenia and Azerbaijan is of utmost importance; in the meantime, we call for the withdrawal of all military forces from the border areas, returning to positions before 12 May 2021, to prevent escalation and guarantee the rights of the local population.

The unblocking of regional communications, in line with the trilateral statements of 9 November 2020 and 11 January 2021, will present a significant opportunity for Armenia and the entire South Caucasus region. We support the Armenian government in pursuing this ambitious objective and encourage further progress. Likewise, the recently started efforts to normalise relations with Turkey without preconditions have our strong support, as their success would be a boon to the regional economic development and stability.

We look forward to further developing our interparliamentary relations and holding the 3rd meeting of the Committee in 2023 in Brussels or Strasbourg.”

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