



## Joint statement by

- the Chair of the Delegation for relations with the South Caucasus, MEP Marina KALJURAND,
- the European Parliament's Standing Rapporteur on Armenia, MEP Andrey KOVATCHEV, and
- the European Parliament's Standing Rapporteur on Azerbaijan, MEP Željana ZOVKO,

## on the serious humanitarian situation in Nagorno-Karabakh

**Brussels, 1 August 2023** - *"We are deeply worried by the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation in Nagorno-Karabakh due to Azerbaijan's ongoing blockade of the Lachin Corridor in violation of its commitments under the ceasefire statement of 9 November 2020 and of the legally binding ruling of the International Court of Justice of 22 February 2023, reaffirmed on 6 July 2023.*

*For almost eight months already, the local population of Nagorno-Karabakh has been suffering the consequences of the blockade, surviving only thanks to local production and to essential humanitarian supplies, notably by the ICRC. Azerbaijan's extension of the blockade to humanitarian supplies in recent weeks has now led to the scarcity of basic foodstuffs, life-saving medical products and other essential goods, while the shortage of fuel has disrupted local production and distribution. Medical evacuations by the ICRC have been disrupted as well. The estimated 120 000 inhabitants of Nagorno-Karabakh are facing a humanitarian crisis that requires urgent attention from the international community.*

*We fully support and subscribe to the statement of the EU High Representative Josep Borrell of 26 July 2023. We condemn the ongoing blockade of humanitarian supplies and the politicisation of humanitarian access, which further aggravates the already dire situation in the region. Azerbaijan's offer of providing aid via Aghdam is separate to its existing obligations regarding the Lachin Corridor which must be respected. Humanitarian aid must be allowed to the region and any impediment to access constitutes a violation of international humanitarian law. Opening additional routes can only be encouraged, but it is a separate issue, which should be mutually agreed in the context of direct negotiations between Baku and Stepanakert.*

*We fully support diplomatic efforts by President of the European Council Charles Michel to find a sustainable and long-term solution to the decades-long conflict and the ongoing crisis in the region by facilitating negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan. During the latest meeting held in Brussels on 15 July 2023, both sides agreed, along with other pressing issues, to facilitate humanitarian access to the region in order to alleviate human suffering. Sadly, the ongoing blockade runs contrary to the objective of peace negotiations and much-needed confidence-building efforts.*

*We recall that on 15 March 2023, the European Parliament called on the Council, ‘if the International Court of Justice’s order of 22 February 2023 is not immediately implemented, to impose targeted sanctions against Azerbaijani government officials’. We also recall that, at the European Parliament plenary sitting of 13 June 2023, the EU High Representative committed to raising in the Council the option of imposing such sanctions. We reiterate our call on Baku to end the blockade immediately and commit to the respect of international obligations and norms in order to prevent a humanitarian disaster.”*

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