



**Speech by MEP Marina KALJURAND,
Chair of the Delegation for relations with the South Caucasus,
at the plenary debate on**

**"Situation in Nagorno-Karabakh after Azerbaijan's attack and
the continuing threats against Armenia"**

Strasbourg, 3 October 2023

President, Commissioner, Minister, Colleagues

Once again, we are discussing the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh. Tomorrow we will vote on a resolution. In this context, I would like to underline a couple of points:

First, the EU should reconsider its relations with Azerbaijan and make them conditional. We have to stop with appeasement: there must be immediate consequences for the Aliyev regime.

A year ago, Commission President Ursula von der Leyen was in Baku standing next to President Aliyev and praising Azerbaijan for being the EU's "reliable economic partner".

Today, the Commission must make it crystal clear that Azerbaijan's actions, starting with military actions and concluding with forced displacement of the population of Nagorno-Karabakh, that *de facto* constitutes ethnic cleansing, are not acceptable. The EU should stand behind its core values - international law and a rules-based international order.

The High Representative promised a “strong response”. The EU has political leverage and has to use it. The EU’s “strong response” should include:

- sanctioning of responsible Azerbaijani authorities,
- halt of negotiations on a new EU-Azerbaijan agreement,
- halt of visa facilitation agreement, and
- suspension of the gas deal.

Second, Armenia needs today the EU’s substantial political and financial support more than ever before. To deal with not only the immediate challenge of taking care of the refugees, but in particular to withstand Russia’s pressure and discourage any aggression from Baku.

The EEAS should consider increasing the capacity of the EU Mission in Armenia and convince Azerbaijan to expand it to Azerbaijan’s territory. This can be crucial for preventing a new escalation on the Armenia-Azerbaijan border.

It is time to upgrade CEPA (Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement) and consider visa liberalisation agreement with Armenia.

And yes, Armenia should be given a clear European perspective in a longer perspective. This is not easy and Armenia has to face some challenging questions, like customs union and CSTO (Collective Security Treaty Organization). But it is doable with the EU’s support to Armenia’s democratic path.

Finally, I hope that the human sufferings, we all have witnessed, will have an impact on the **coming meeting in Granada**, and in particular, on political will of president Aliyev to conclude **a peace agreement** that will bring peace and stability to the region, as well as protect human rights of Armenians who decide to return to their homes in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Thank you!