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*Plenary sitting*

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**B9-0152/2022**

8.3.2022

## MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for a debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 144 of the Rules of Procedure

on Destruction of cultural heritage in Nagorno-Karabakh  
(2022/2582(RSP))

**Željana Zovko, Peter van Dalen, Michael Gahler, Sandra Kalniete, Isabel Wiseler-Lima, François-Xavier Bellamy, Tom Vandenkendelaere, Eugen Tomac, José Manuel Fernandes, Gabriel Mato, Luděk Niedermayer, Loránt Vincze, Sara Skytvedal, Tomáš Zdechovský, Janina Ochojska, Christian Sagartz, Arba Kokalari, Loucas Furlas, Jiří Pospíšil, Peter Pollák, Stanislav Polčák, Elżbieta Katarzyna Łukacijewska, Miriam Lexmann, David Lega, Stelios Kypourouopoulos, Seán Kelly, Michaela Šojdrová, Krzysztof Hetman, Ivan Štefanec, Vangelis Meimarakis, Vladimír Bilčík, Romana Tomc, Lefteris Christoforou**  
on behalf of the PPE Group

**European Parliament resolution on Destruction of cultural heritage in Nagorno-Karabakh  
(2022/2582(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Armenia and Azerbaijan,
- having regard to the Orders of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) of 7 December 2021,
- having regard to the Joint Statement of 9 December 2021 by the Chair of the Delegation for relations with the South Caucasus, the European Parliament's Standing Rapporteur on Armenia and the European Parliament's Standing Rapporteur on Azerbaijan on the Orders of the International Court of Justice of 7 December 2021 in the cases between Armenia and Azerbaijan,
- having regard to the Council conclusions on EU approach to Cultural heritage in conflicts and crises of 21 June 2021,
- having regard to the UNESCO Declaration concerning the Intentional Destruction of Cultural Heritage of 2003,
- having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966,
- having regard to the European Cultural Convention, the revised European Convention for the Protection of Archaeological Heritage, and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, to which Armenia and Azerbaijan are parties,
- having regard to The Hague Convention of 1954 for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, to which Armenia and Azerbaijan are parties, and its Protocol, as applicable to occupied territories, and the Second Protocol on enhanced protection of cultural property, which prohibits "any alteration to, or change of use of, a cultural property which is intended to conceal or destroy cultural historical or scientific evidence",
- having regard to the reports of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) of the Council of Europe,
- having regard to the Economic and Investment Plan for the Eastern Partnership countries,
- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
- having regard to Rule 144 of its rules of procedure,

- A. whereas the destruction or desecration of any monuments or objects of cultural, religious or national heritage infringes the principles of the European Union;
  - B. whereas respect for minorities, including the protection of their cultural heritage, is a part of the European Neighbourhood Policy;
  - C. whereas the most recent armed conflict in and around Nagorno-Karabakh ended following an agreement on a complete ceasefire in and around Nagorno-Karabakh between Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia, which was signed on 9 November 2020 and entered into force on 10 November 2020;
  - D. whereas on 7 December 2021 the ICJ in its Order has indicated that Azerbaijan “shall take all necessary measures to prevent and punish acts of vandalism and desecration affecting Armenian cultural heritage, including but not limited to churches and other places of worship, monuments, landmarks, cemeteries and artefacts”; whereas the ICJ ordered Armenia and Azerbaijan to “take all necessary measures to prevent the incitement and promotion of racial hatred”; whereas the ICJ ordered Azerbaijan to “protect from violence and bodily harm all persons captured in relation to the 2020 Conflict who remain in detention”; whereas in its Orders the ICJ has indicated that “both parties shall refrain from any action which might aggravate or extend the dispute before the Court or make it more difficult to resolve”;
  - E. whereas UNESCO reiterated countries’ obligation to protect cultural heritage in terms of The Hague Convention of 1954 for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and proposed to carry out an independent expert mission to draw a preliminary inventory of significant cultural properties, as a first step towards the effective safeguarding of the region’s heritage;
  - F. whereas the safeguarding of the cultural heritage is an important condition for the establishment of lasting peace;
  - G. whereas serious allegations in the case before the ICJ have been raised about the involvement of the authorities of Azerbaijan in the destruction of cemeteries, churches and historical monuments in Nagorno-Karabakh;
  - H. stresses that respect for minority rights, including historical, religious and cultural heritage is conditional on the genuine and affective development of the European Neighbourhood Policy;
- 1. Condemns the destruction of cultural heritage in Nagorno-Karabakh and call for its immediate protection;
  - 2. Stresses that there is a universal dimension of cultural heritage as a testimony of history inseparable from peoples’ identity, which the international community has to protect and preserve for future generations;
  - 3. Recalls that historical revisionism and the defacement and destruction of cultural or religious heritage run counter to the decision of the ICJ of 7 December 2021, as well as with the European Parliament resolution of 21 May 2021;

4. Welcomes the central role played by UNESCO in protecting cultural heritage and promoting culture as an instrument to bring people closer together and foster dialogue;
5. Underlines that the measures indicated in the Orders of the International Court of Justice of 7 December 2021 have to be taken without delay; stresses that if there are any new cases of destruction of cultural heritage they should be addressed immediately by the international community;
6. Reiterates its call on the EU to incorporate a clause on protecting archaeological and historical sites into the Action Plans guiding the partnership between the EU and Armenia and Azerbaijan, who are participating in the European Neighbourhood Policy;
7. Welcomes the proposal of UNESCO to send an independent expert mission and calls for sending the mission without delay; stresses that an unhindered access to all cultural sites must be granted by Azerbaijan in order for the mission to make an inventory on the ground and to see what happened to the sites;
8. Calls on the EU, UNESCO, the Council of Europe, and the OSCE to jointly encourage and support efforts aimed at safeguarding cultural and religious heritage;
9. Calls on the EU and the Member States to continue supporting the work of international organisations aimed at the protection of cultural and religious heritage;
10. Calls on the Commission to use all available levers to prevent acts of vandalism, destruction or alteration of cultural heritage in Nagorno-Karabakh;
11. Underlines that the efforts of the international community in safeguarding the cultural heritage are essential to the establishment of the foundation for sustainable peace in the region;
12. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission, the Council, the Commission, the Government and the President of Armenia, the Government and the President of Azerbaijan, the Secretary- General of the OSCE, the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe, the Director-General of UNESCO, and the Secretary-General of the United Nations.