



Plenary sitting

B9-0163/2024

8.3.2024

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

pursuant to Rule 132(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on closer ties between the EU and Armenia and the need for a peace agreement between Azerbaijan and Armenia
(2024/2580(RSP))

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B9-0163/2024

European Parliament resolution on closer ties between the EU and Armenia and the need for a peace agreement between Azerbaijan and Armenia (2024/2580(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union,
 - having regard to the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) between the EU and Armenia¹,
 - having regard to the joint press statement of 13 February 2024 following the fifth EU-Armenia Partnership Council,
 - having regard to the Partnership Implementation Report on Armenia of 12 February 2024,
 - having regard to the EU Roadmap for Engagement with Civil Society in Armenia for the period 2021-2027,
 - having regard to the statement of 5 October 2023 by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan of Armenia, President Michel of the European Council, President Macron of France and Chancellor Scholz of Germany,
 - having regard to the joint statement of 5 October 2023 by Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan,
 - having regard to the address of the Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan to the plenary of the European Parliament on 17 October 2023,
 - having regard to the order of the International Court of Justice on the application of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (*Armenia v. Azerbaijan*) of 17 November 2023,
 - having regard to the 1991 Almaty Declaration,
 - having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas EU-Armenia relations are based on common values, such as democracy, the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms, and a shared interest in Armenia's engagement in economic and political reforms as well as regional cooperation, including in the framework of the Eastern Partnership;
- B. whereas, following the 2018 revolution, Armenia has steadily promoted the values enshrined in the EU Treaties and, according to *The Economist's* 2023 Democracy

¹ [OJL 23, 26.1.2018, p. 4.](#)

Index, is the leading democracy in the region;

- C. whereas Armenia has signalled its intention to further develop and deepen its partnership and cooperation with the EU, including through bilateral relations and within the regional policy framework of the Eastern Partnership;
- D. whereas the EU-Armenia Partnership Council met for the fifth time in Brussels on 13 February 2024; whereas the meeting confirmed the mutual interest and commitment of the EU and Armenia to strengthen and deepen their relations based on common values; whereas both parties agreed to launch work on a new EU-Armenia partnership agenda, establishing more ambitious joint priorities for cooperation in all areas;
- E. whereas the Commission announced further support measures for Armenia on 5 October 2023, including a further EUR 5.25 million in emergency assistance, increased funding for the EU4Peace programme, additional annual programmes intended for budget support, technical assistance to address issues such as air safety and nuclear safety, and the economic and investment plan to support infrastructure, social protection and sustainable energy solutions;
- F. whereas Armenia continues to face critical economic challenges despite making significant progress in macroeconomic and structural reforms; whereas Armenia's economy is still largely dependent on Russia, with the latter accounting for around 35 % of Armenia's foreign trade; whereas Russia continues to access restricted EU goods through supply chains running through third countries, including Armenia; whereas, following the introduction of EU sanctions on Russia, Armenian exports to Russia tripled in 2022 and doubled between January and August 2023;
- G. whereas Armenia has frozen its participation in the Moscow-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) following Russia's unwillingness to defend Armenia in the face of Azerbaijani aggression; whereas the thousands of Russian soldiers still stationed on Armenian soil and military threats by Azerbaijan further threaten Armenia's security;
- H. whereas Armenia has recognised the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan on several occasions, including through the joint statement of 5 October 2023 by Prime Minister Pashinyan with President of the European Council Charles Michel, President Macron of France and Chancellor Scholz of Germany, but Azerbaijan has not reciprocated;
- I. whereas, despite the peace negotiations led by President Michel, Azerbaijan launched an offensive on 19 September 2023 leading to the exodus of almost the entire population of Nagorno-Karabakh in just a few days; whereas Armenia received over 100 000 people forcibly displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh; whereas Armenia has pledged to fully integrate Nagorno-Karabakh refugees, but the country lacks funds and a comprehensive long-term plan to adequately respond to the refugees' needs;
- J. whereas the exodus of Armenians was preceded by decades of premeditated hate speech and gestures by the Azerbaijani leadership, including President Aliyev, directed at ethnic Armenians; whereas the 'Military Trophy Park' in Baku, which depicts Armenians in a derogatory manner, as well as calculated inflammatory statements, have further deepened the fear of attacks and forced displacement among the Nagorno-

Karabakh Armenians;

- K. whereas on 17 November 2023 the International Court of Justice ordered Azerbaijan to ensure that persons who left Nagorno-Karabakh after 19 September 2023 and who wish to return, and those who remained in Nagorno-Karabakh and wish to leave, are able to do so in a safe and unimpeded way and are free from the use of force or intimidation that may cause them to flee;
- L. whereas many Armenian cultural heritage sites and artefacts located in Nagorno-Karabakh, such as churches, cemeteries and *khachkars* (Armenian cross-stones) are under threat of being vandalised, destroyed or altered in order to erase traces of Armenian history, as has been the case with Armenian heritage sites in another region of Azerbaijan, namely Nakhichevan;
- M. whereas Prime Minister Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Aliyev met in Munich on 17 February 2024, with the mediation of German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, for the first time since Azerbaijan's attack on Nagorno-Karabakh in September 2023;
- N. whereas Prime Minister Pashinyan commented on 15 and 16 February 2024 that Azerbaijan had rejected Armenia's latest proposals on border delimitation/demarcation and shared his analysis that Azerbaijan could be preparing to launch 'military operations in some areas of the border with the aim of turning it into a large-scale war against the Republic of Armenia';
- O. whereas, even if the envisaged doubling of Azerbaijani gas supplies to the EU comes to pass, bringing the volume to 20 billion cubic metres by 2027, the share of Azerbaijani gas in the EU market would still be below 4 %; whereas the EU is Azerbaijan's largest export market, making Azerbaijan much more dependent on the EU than vice versa; whereas in November 2022, Azerbaijan announced a deal with Gazprom to purchase Russian gas for its own consumption in order to free up export capacity to the EU, thus undermining the EU's intention not to finance Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine;
- P. whereas the second ministerial meeting of the EU-Azerbaijan Green Energy Advisory Council was held in Baku on 1 March 2024; whereas Commissioner Simson, in her speech, referred to Azerbaijan as a 'trusted and reliable energy partner', stressing that the EU 'always saw in Azerbaijan a trusted partner' and that the 'EU commitment to Azerbaijan is long-term';
- Q. whereas Azerbaijan held another sham Presidential election on 7 February 2024; whereas the Aliyev regime has recently limited freedom of expression even further, conducting a wave of arrests of human rights defenders and independent journalists since November 2023, most of whom are still being detained on trumped-up charges; whereas what was left of the independent media, civil society and critical voices in the country has been completely muzzled as a consequence of these latest attacks;
- 1. Welcomes Armenia's European aspirations and its readiness to be closer to the European Union; commends Armenia's ambitious reform agenda and the resilience of its democracy in the most challenging times, despite the ongoing security threats; expresses its clear support to the strengthening of EU-Armenia relations and the

ongoing development of closer ties, in all areas, based on the needs of Armenia;

2. Welcomes, in this regard, the outcomes of the fifth meeting of the EU-Armenia Partnership Council; calls for the swift development of the newly announced EU-Armenia partnership agenda, and urges that the agenda include ambitious commitments on political dialogue and reform, democracy, the rule of law and human rights, economic, trade and sectoral cooperation, visa liberalisation, sustainability and the green transition, women's rights, and the rights of refugees and other minorities; calls on the Commission to ensure the meaningful involvement of Armenian civil society in the development of the new agenda;
3. Calls on the Commission and the Council to ensure visa-free travel for Armenians by launching the visa liberalisation dialogue without delay; notes that visa-free travel will foster and encourage people-to-people contact between Armenia and EU Member States;
4. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to increase their efforts to increase peer-to-peer engagement between Armenia and EU Member States and institutions in order to ensure that the next generation of Armenians already reaps the benefits of European integration;
5. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to develop deeper economic integration with Armenia including via the CEPA; highlights that strengthening economic relations will strengthen Armenia's ability to move away from its current disproportionate economic dependence on Russia; calls on Armenia to combat the evasion of EU sanctions against Russia;
6. Calls on the EU to enhance linkages with Armenia by constructing digital and energy infrastructure, investing in energy relations, and strengthening the country's capacity to combat disinformation and other forms of hybrid threat coming from autocratic actors in the region;
7. Welcomes the further support measures for Armenia announced by the Commission on 5 October 2023, including the economic and investment plan for investments in infrastructure, social protection and sustainable energy solutions; calls, to that end, for the application of the 'do no significant harm' principle in infrastructure investments;
8. Welcomes, furthermore, Armenia's adoption of a long-term low emissions development strategy on 28 December 2023, and strongly encourages Armenia to further scale up its climate ambitions in order to align with EU targets;
9. Welcomes Armenia's decision to sign up to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court;
10. Commends Armenia's active participation in the Eastern Partnership framework; notes that Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia have now been granted EU candidate status; calls, therefore, for a constructive review of the Eastern Partnership framework in order for the objectives to be maintained while ensuring the framework is fit for purpose in the context of the changing dynamics of its members and prioritising those that respect EU values and principles;

11. Reiterates its condemnation of Azerbaijan's military campaign of September 2023 against Nagorno-Karabakh; underlines that this attack led to an immediate exodus of ethnic Armenians to Armenia, which is equivalent to ethnic cleansing as defined by the UN Security Council and as such contrary to international law; calls for the full, immediate and effective implementation of all the International Court of Justice orders in the case on the application of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (*Armenia v. Azerbaijan*);
12. Condemns the continued inflammatory statements by Azerbaijani officials, including President Aliyev, degrading the Armenian ethnicity and questioning the territorial integrity of Armenia;
13. Welcomes the additional EUR 5.5 million in EU humanitarian aid to support the Karabakh Armenians displaced from the Nagorno-Karabakh region following their mass displacement in 2023; calls on the Commission and Member States to commit to providing to long-term humanitarian and technical support to Armenia in this regard, as substantial resource and planning challenges lie ahead, as well as a significant risk of poverty and social frictions if refugees are not adequately housed and socio-economically integrated; encourages Armenia to develop a fully articulated, long-term plan addressing housing, integration in the labour market and social services for people who were forced out of Nagorno-Karabakh;
14. Welcomes the strengthened presence of the civilian EU Mission in Armenia (EUMA); regrets the occurrence of ceasefire violations, most recently that leading to the deaths of four Armenian soldiers at the hands of Azerbaijan in a so-called 'revenge operation' on 13 February 2024 following the injuring of an Azerbaijani soldier; expresses serious concern about reports of Russian 'peacekeepers' preventing EUMA observers from entering Nerkin Hand in Armenia's southern Syunik Province;
15. Underlines its unwavering support for the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of the borders of Armenia; stresses also that Armenia has the right to reject suggestions of a corridor connecting mainland Azerbaijan with Nakhchivan, to be controlled by Russian border troops and without Armenian customs or border checks; is deeply concerned by Azerbaijan's continued hostile positioning towards Armenia, which raises concerns of renewed violence; urges Azerbaijan to affirm its unequivocal recognition of the territorial integrity of Armenia, in line with the 1991 Almaty Declaration;
16. Insists on the importance of establishing durable peace and stability in the South Caucasus; calls, in this regard, for the continuation of negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan on all pending issues, with a view to concluding a sustainable and comprehensive peace agreement; welcomes the most recent meeting between Prime Minister Pashinyan and President Aliyev on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference on 17 February 2024; welcomes Armenia's position of negotiating in good faith towards a sustainable peace, including through various proposals such as the opening of regional transport links with the Crossroads of Peace project; urges the Commission and the Council to ensure the EU's ability to credibly and effectively continue supporting the peace negotiations;

17. Invites the Commission to urgently reassess the EU's diplomatic and security architecture and the geopolitical configurations in the wider region of the South Caucasus in light of the new facts on the ground and the interests of countries such as Russia, Türkiye and Iran, as well as to develop a strategy in response to the growing trend among autocratic regimes to set aside diplomatic efforts in favour of violent military force;
18. Welcomes Armenia's decision to freeze its participation in the CSTO and seek a more reliable security architecture; supports Armenia's decision to ask the Russian Federation to withdraw its secret service border guards from its national airport;
19. Stresses that the lack of an appropriate response from the EU to Azerbaijan's violence both in 2020 and in 2023 set a detrimental precedent; reiterates its invitation to the Commission to present an overall reassessment of the EU's relations with Azerbaijan; stresses that the EU must make it clear to the President of Azerbaijan that any violation of Armenia's territory will have the harshest of consequences; reiterates its call for targeted sanctions against the government officials in Baku responsible for multiple ceasefire violations and human rights abuses in Nagorno-Karabakh;
20. Stresses that Azerbaijani military aggression in 2023 epitomises how the EU's two-faced approach towards some autocratic regimes, where it criticises their disregard of human rights and peaceful diplomacy one day and announces unconditional energy deals with them the next, undermines any influence the EU wishes to have in encouraging basic democratisation in these countries or deterring military action against our democratic partners;
21. Reiterates its call for the suspension of the Memorandum of Understanding on a Strategic Partnership in the Field of Energy with Azerbaijan, as relying on autocratic regimes to address the EU's energy needs is not just morally questionable but also politically unsustainable if the EU genuinely wishes to end its energy dependence on autocratic regimes;
22. Takes note of the holding of the second ministerial meeting of the EU-Azerbaijan Green Energy Advisory Council in Baku on 1 March 2024 and deeply regrets that Commissioner Simson referred to Azerbaijan as a 'trusted and reliable energy partner'; invites Commissioner Simson to debate with Parliament its call for the suspension of the Memorandum of Understanding on a Strategic Partnership in the Field of Energy with Azerbaijan before the end of the legislature;
23. Calls on the Commission to ensure that the appalling human rights situation in Azerbaijan is prioritised in its dealings with the country; is extremely concerned about the recent surge in detentions of journalists and human rights defenders in Azerbaijan; insists that closer trade relations with Azerbaijan can only be pursued further if Azerbaijan significantly improves its human rights record and releases all those unfairly imprisoned, including Dr Gubad Ibadoghlu, Ulvi Hasanli, Sevinc Vaqifgizi, Aziz Orujov, Rufat Muradli, Hafiz Babali, Mahammad Kekalov, Nargiz Absalamova and Tofiq Yagublu;
24. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign

Affairs and Security Policy, the European External Action Service, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the President, Prime Minister, Government and Parliament of Armenia, and the President, Government and Parliament of Azerbaijan.