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*Plenary sitting*

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**B9-0168/2024**

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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on behalf of the ECR Group

**B9-0168/2024**

**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 its previous resolutions on Armenia and Azerbaijan,
  - having regard to its resolution of 28 February 2024 on the implementation of the common foreign and security policy – annual report 2023<sup>1</sup>,
  - having regard to the Comprehensive and enhanced Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Armenia, of the other part (CEPA)<sup>2</sup>, which fully entered into force on 1 March 2021,
  - having regard to the Council and Commission Decision of 31 May 1999 on the conclusion of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Azerbaijan, of the other part<sup>3</sup> (EU-Azerbaijan Partnership and Cooperation Agreement), in force since 1999,
  - having regard to the outcome of the fifth EU-Armenia Partnership Council meeting of 13 February 2024,
  - having regard to the joint staff working document of 9 February 2024 entitled ‘Partnership Implementation Report on Armenia’ (SWD(2024)0041),
  - having regard to the launch of the EU Mission in Armenia (EUMA) on 20 February 2023,
  - 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 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;
- C. whereas the EU and Armenia agreed to launch work on a new EU-Armenia Partnership

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<sup>1</sup> Texts adopted, P9\_TA(2024)0104.

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 23, 26.1.2018, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> OJ L 246, 17.9.1999, p. 1.

Agenda, establishing more ambitious joint priorities for cooperation across all dimensions;

- D. whereas Armenia has gone through major political changes in recent years, with a government committed to both ensuring genuinely functioning democratic institutions and to using the CEPA as a blueprint for reforms to modernise the country, despite considerable challenges;
- E. whereas Armenia has made further progress in implementing reforms in key areas such as justice and the rule of law and the fight against corruption; whereas Armenia has also made significant progress in the fields of education, health, migration and civil protection;
- F. 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; whereas Armenia's 'Crossroads of Peace' project emphasises the importance of regional cooperation and connectivity; whereas on 17 October 2023 in the European Parliament, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan indicated that Armenia is ready to move closer to the European Union;
- G. whereas the EU and Armenia have discussed options to start a visa liberalisation dialogue;
- H. whereas the EU remains the largest donor in the country, with important support in the areas of justice, the rule of law, anti-corruption, education and the green transition;
- I. whereas Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has had negative implications for the South Caucasus and has further complicated the security situation in the region; whereas Russia's alleged readiness to guarantee the security of Armenia has proven to be non-existent; whereas Armenia has already managed to weaken its ties with Russia in relation to security, as its participation in the Russia-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) has been frozen, although it remains in the Eurasian Economic Union;
- J. whereas on 19 September 2023, Azerbaijan launched an unprovoked military offensive to regain, by force, control over its internationally recognised territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, which ended with the exodus of the Armenian population from this territory; whereas all state institutions of the so-called Nagorno-Karabakh Republic were dissolved as of 1 January 2024; whereas the renewed hostilities in the South Caucasus are a cause for serious concern and require more proactive EU involvement in the region; whereas prospects for normalising relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan remain fragile, which is why the EU should support and encourage both sides on their path to achieving a peace agreement, including by offering prospects for closer integration with the EU, if they decide to pursue that path;
- K. whereas the armed conflicts between Armenia and Azerbaijan have had a catastrophic impact on the cultural, religious and historical heritage of the whole region, resulting in the forced displacement of people and the destruction of their cultural heritage;
- L. whereas on 13 February 2024 the Commission announced the allocation of an

additional EUR 5.5 million in humanitarian aid to support the Armenians displaced from the Nagorno-Karabakh region, in addition to the EUR 12.2 million announced in September 2023;

- M. whereas, reportedly, over 20 000 Armenians remain detained in Baku awaiting trial, most of whom are civilians and/or humanitarian aid workers;
  - N. whereas a sustainable normalisation of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan requires that all violence cease; whereas the state commissions of Azerbaijan and Armenia on the delimitation of their mutual borders met for the seventh time; whereas the two sides decided to complete the agreement ‘as soon as possible’, which should be a major step towards signing the peace treaty; whereas it should also contribute to the long-term stability of bilateral relations and of the wider region as a whole; whereas this goal can only be achieved when the authorities of Armenia and Azerbaijan can guarantee peaceful coexistence and respect for minority rights;
  - O. whereas on 7 December 2023, Armenia and Azerbaijan released a joint statement announcing tangible confidence-building measures, including the release of 32 detained Armenian military servicemen and 2 Azerbaijani military servicemen; whereas Azerbaijan is still keeping 23 Armenian hostages, including former leaders of Nagorno-Karabakh;
  - P. whereas four Armenian soldiers were killed in an Azerbaijani attack on Nerkin Hand in Syunik Province on 13 February 2024, the most intense escalation along the border in months;
  - Q. whereas since December 2023 a number of bilateral meetings have taken place between Armenia and Azerbaijan, including at a high level between Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev within the framework of the Munich Security Conference on 17 February 2024; whereas while both leaders maintain that they have agreed on the main principles of a peace treaty, both sides voice disagreement over many details, including the opening of transport links, border delimitation and demarcation, and over who should mediate; whereas the EU has offered its assistance for negotiations between the two sides;
  - R. whereas previous warnings from Parliament regarding the situation have not led to any significant change in the EU’s policy towards Azerbaijan; whereas three decades of diplomacy and peacebuilding efforts by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the EU and other international actors have failed to deter Azerbaijan from its use of military force, and to find a peaceful solution to the conflict;
1. Welcomes the progress Armenia has made on implementing the CEPA road map; calls on the members of the EU-Armenia Partnership Council to work closely together to implement ongoing and future reforms;
  2. Reiterates the EU’s commitment to supporting Armenia’s sovereignty, democracy and territorial integrity; believes that the EU must provide Armenia with an ambitious plan for cooperation by upgrading the current Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement, anchoring Armenia more firmly in the community of Western democracies and helping it unlock relations with neighbours;

3. Reiterates its support for the democratically elected government of Armenia; welcomes Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's declaration that Armenia will not be dragged into a new war with Azerbaijan and his recent calls for the resumption of peace talks at the highest level with Azerbaijan;
4. Welcomes Armenia's ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court;
5. Encourages the European Union to launch the EU-Armenia visa liberalisation dialogue, which will foster people-to-people contacts and will contribute to the further implementation of reforms;
6. Commends the role of civil society in Armenia's transition from a post-Soviet system into a Western-style democracy and encourages the EU to further support the efforts of the people of Armenia to achieve lasting reforms in their country, based on the rule of law and shared values;
7. Calls on the Commission and the Council to consider exploring the options for granting candidate status to Armenia, taking into account the country's European aspirations, which should be followed by its exit from the Russia-led CSTO and the Eurasian Economic Union; calls for the EU to put forward measures to mitigate the consequences of such a decision;
8. Condemns Russia's interference in Armenia, which is aimed at spreading unrest, as well as the overall role played by Russia, which has fuelled conflict for decades, using it for its own political gains;
9. Encourages the international community to assist Azerbaijan with demining Nagorno-Karabakh, where 1.5 million landmines have been left, some produced as recently as 2021; highlights that these mines are taking lives every week, presenting a serious problem for economic development, the return of internally displaced persons (IDPs), agriculture and construction and transport projects;
10. Reiterates its condemnation of the Azerbaijani military incursions into the internationally recognised territory of Armenia over recent years; reiterates its demand for the withdrawal of Azerbaijan's troops from the entirety of the sovereign territory of Armenia and for the release of all illegally detained Armenians; condemns the recent attack on Armenian soldiers in Nerkin Hand; highlights that Azerbaijan's connectivity issues with its exclave of Nakhchivan should be resolved with full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Armenia; recalls that a potential solution to this problem may be based on the existing model of the Królewiec district;
11. Reiterates its condemnation of the pre-planned and unjustified attack by Azerbaijan against the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh and the people who have remained in the region; calls on the Azerbaijani authorities to allow the safe return of the Armenian population to Nagorno-Karabakh and to offer solid guarantees regarding the protection of their rights; demands the protection of the Armenian cultural, historical and religious heritage in Nagorno-Karabakh in line with UNESCO standards and Azerbaijan's international commitments;

12. Underlines the right of Armenian refugees to return to Nagorno-Karabakh; welcomes the fact that their houses have continued to be protected by Azerbaijani police since they left in September 2023 and that Baku has delayed the return of Azerbaijani IDPs to Khankendi and other places abandoned by Armenians in September 2023; calls on Baku to strengthen this protection in order to eliminate cases of looting; points out that if some Armenians decide not to return, property rights must be resolved justly by both sides;
13. Highlights that Armenia and Azerbaijan are now closer than ever to signing a peace agreement that can pave the way for the economic and transport integration of the Caucasus, expanding to Europe in the west and Central Asia in the east;
14. Expresses its hope that if a durable peace agreement is reached soon, Armenia will finally have the chance to break out of its regional isolation and open diplomatic relations with Türkiye and Azerbaijan, subsequently gaining economic and trade benefits from integrating into the region; encourages the EU and its partners to support this process;
15. Underlines the need for a comprehensive peace agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan; believes that genuine dialogue between Azerbaijan and Armenia is the only sustainable way forward and calls for the EU and its Member States to support such efforts, which must include the mutual recognition of territorial integrity, guarantees for the rights and security of Nagorno-Karabakh's Armenian population and the release of the remaining prisoners, including the former leaders of Nagorno-Karabakh, and an end to the sham trials against them; highlights that a dignified and durable regional peace that maintains sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity for both countries is a prerequisite for stability in the neighbourhood; is concerned about the attempts by some leaders and regional powers to exploit the current situation in a way that could threaten the fragile prospects for peace;
16. Calls on the EU civilian mission in Armenia (EUMA) to closely monitor the evolving security situation on the ground, provide transparent reporting to Parliament and actively contribute to conflict resolution efforts; calls for the EU and its Member States to strengthen the EUMA's mandate, increase its size and extend its duration;
17. Calls on the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the European External Action Service to further support Armenia via the European Peace Facility, in particular with a view to strengthening its defence capabilities against hybrid threats, in order to enlarge its security space beyond the CSTO; welcomes the establishment of the EU-Armenia Political and Security Dialogue and its second meeting on 15 November 2023; calls for the establishment of regular security and defence consultations between Armenia and the European Union, providing a platform for addressing all security-related matters;
18. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Vice-President of the European Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Council, the Commission, the Government and President of Armenia, the Government and President of Azerbaijan, the Secretary-General of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe,

the Director-General of UNESCO, and the Secretary-General of the United Nations.