

# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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*Committee on International Trade*

**2007/2076(INI)**

11.10.2007

## **OPINION**

of the Committee on International Trade

for the Committee on Foreign Affairs

on a more effective EU policy for South Caucasus: from promises to actions  
(2007/2076(INI))

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## SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on International Trade calls on the Committee on Foreign Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Considers that trade policy is a key component in ensuring political stability and economic development that leads to a reduction in poverty in South Caucasus and that it is crucial for further integration between the EU and South Caucasus; stresses that, in respect of trade policy, the social dimension must be considered;
2. Highlights the geopolitical situation of Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan in relation to Russia, Iran and Turkey, and the growing interest of other economic powers, such as Russia, the United States and China in this area; considers it therefore of the utmost importance that cooperation with South Caucasus be given the highest priority, not least in matters relating to energy;
3. Considers it essential to take into account the different levels of development among the South Caucasus countries and between those countries and the EU; stresses, as a result, the need to give those countries the right to control the speed with which they open up their markets and their national strategies for economic and social development;
4. Welcomes the inclusion of Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan in the European Neighbourhood Policy, which is a significant tool for improving bilateral trade with the EU, if the priorities of all parties concerned are addressed; urges all three countries to implement all trade-relevant provisions in their respective Partnership and Cooperation Agreements; believes that further regulatory approximation with the *acquis communautaire* on specific trade-related matters will help all three countries to increase and diversify exports;
5. Takes note of the progress made in South Caucasus countries as regards the adoption and implementation of legislation that meets human rights standards and emphasises that sustained efforts to further strengthen respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is of vital importance for maintaining a favourable business environment and improving trade interaction between South Caucasus and the EU;
6. Stresses the need to facilitate the visa regime between the countries of South Caucasus and the EU as a tool to enhance economic and trade cooperation and further develop the European Neighbourhood Policy;
7. Believes that the objectives which have been set out in the National Action Plans will be attained and that this will ensure social and economic development and progress as well as closer cooperation between South Caucasus and the EU;
8. Calls on the Community institutions to strengthen their commitment by creating economic incentives to encourage strengthened regional cooperation in the area, including enhanced internal trade between the three countries, a common approach to energy, transport, the environment, research and innovation, and education as well as regional law enforcement cooperation initiatives; stresses the importance for Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan of cooperation within the Black Sea region;

9. Stresses that Georgia and Armenia should fully comply with WTO obligations following WTO accession in 2000 and 2003, respectively; supports the accession of Azerbaijan to the WTO;
10. Welcomes the Commission's initiative to undertake a feasibility study to be completed and published as soon as possible in order to evaluate the possibility of a deep Free Trade Agreement with Georgia and Armenia; believes that such an agreement will benefit both parties;
11. Recommends that the Commission make the implementation of core labour standards a permanent element in bilateral consultations at all levels;
12. Calls on the Commission and the Council to implement measures to ensure that Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan benefit as much as possible from the Generalised System of Preferences;
13. Stresses the need for market and regulatory reforms, the definition of standards for the certification of importers, exporters and transporters, the implementation of sanitary and phytosanitary standards, the reinforcement of customs controls, harmonisation and simplification of customs legislation and a coherent border management strategy for all three countries;
14. Calls on the governments of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan to improve the investment climate with a view to strengthening investor confidence and to take measures to stimulate further economic growth; encourages all three governments to develop and strengthen their regional policies, generating and implementing effective measures; urges them to combat corruption effectively; stresses, however, that some countries have made more progress in addressing corruption than others.

## RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

<b>Date adopted</b>	9.10.2007
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 24 -: 2 0: 1
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Kader Arif, Carlos Carnero González, Daniel Caspary, Françoise Castex, Christofer Fjellner, Glyn Ford, Béla Glattfelder, Ignasi Guardans Cambó, Eduard Raul Hellvig, Jacky Henin, Sajjad Karim, Alain Lipietz, Caroline Lucas, Marusya Ivanova Lyubcheva, Erika Mann, Helmuth Markov, David Martin, Vural Öger, Georgios Papastamkos, Peter Šťastný, Robert Sturdy, Daniel Varela Suanzes-Carpegna, Zbigniew Zaleski
<b>Substitute(s) present for the final vote</b>	Jean-Pierre Audy, Vasco Graça Moura, Eugenijus Maldeikis
<b>Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote</b>	Cristian Silviu Buşoi, Jean Louis Cottigny