

Question for oral answer O-000028/2023

to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

Rule 136

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on behalf of the PPE Group

Subject: Humanitarian situation in the Lachin corridor

The Lachin Corridor, the only land connection between Nagorno-Karabakh and the Republic of Armenia has effectively been blocked since 12 December 2022 by Azerbaijan. Firstly, the corridor was blocked by a group of spontaneous ecological activists, protesting against alleged mining activities in the area. On 22 February 2023, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued a provisional binding measure that 'Azerbaijan shall ... take all measures at its disposal to ensure unimpeded movement of persons, vehicles and cargo along the Lachin Corridor in both directions'. To date, the measure has not been implemented. Furthermore, the effective control of the access to the corridor by Azerbaijan was further strengthened by establishment of a checkpoint of its armed forces on 23 April. The Trilateral Statement of 9 November 2020 states in point 6 that the Lachin Corridor remains under the control of the peacekeeping contingent of the Russian Federation, while Azerbaijan guarantees safe movement along it of citizens, vehicles and goods in both directions. Since last November, the regular movement of people, vehicles and cargo has been severely disrupted. The lives of the 120 000 Armenians living in Nagorno-Karabakh have been put in jeopardy. Their access to fresh supplies and free movement has been impeded, and they have experienced cuts to their gas and electricity supplies. The Armenian side speaks of this as a humanitarian catastrophe. The suffering of Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh is happening in parallel to the ongoing peace negotiations facilitated simultaneously by the EU by President Charles Michel, the US and Russia. This complex landscape, where human suffering is tinged with the hope inspired by negotiations at the highest political level, is the backdrop to the following questions:

- 1) How does the Vice-President / High Representative assess the situation of Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh and their fate? What have he and his services done so far to pressurise Azerbaijan into abiding by the ICJ measure and re-establishing the unimpeded movement of people, vehicles and cargo along the Lachin Corridor in both directions?
- 2) Does the Vice-President / High Representative believe that the unblocking of the Lachin Corridor should be considered a prerequisite for further negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, facilitated by the EU, and treated as a gesture of goodwill by Azerbaijan?
- 3) In the light of the ongoing peace negotiations facilitated in parallel by the EU, US and Russia, how does the Vice-President / High Representative believe that the security of the Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh should be effectively secured in a future peace agreement? Does he believe that this should require an international military presence under the auspices of the UN or regional organisations?

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