

Negotiations of the EU/Armenia Association Agreement. Recommendation to the Council, Commission and the EEAS

2011/2315(INI) - 18/04/2012 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 508 votes to 29 with 27 abstentions, a recommendation to the Council, the Commission and the European External Action Service on the negotiations of the EU-Armenia Association Agreement.

Parliament recalls that Association Agreements constitute the appropriate framework for deepening relations, by enhancing political association, socio-economic integration and legal approximation with the EU, and developing cultural relations. While noting Armenia's active commitment to shared values and principles, including democracy, the rule of law, good governance and respect for human rights on which relations with the EU are based, Parliament is deeply concerned about reports of illegal activities exercised by Armenian troops on the occupied Azerbaijani territories, namely regular military manoeuvres. It recalls that the occupation of territories belonging to a third country is a violation of international law and is contrary to the founding principles of the European Neighbourhood Policy.

Accordingly, Parliament makes the following recommendations to the Council, the Commission and the European External Action Service:

- ensure that the Association Agreement is a comprehensive and forward-looking framework for the future development of relations with Armenia, one which enhances political association, economic convergence and legal approximation;
- ensure that the negotiations on the EU-Azerbaijan and EU-Armenia Association Agreements, in line with the demands made in [Parliament's resolution](#) on the need for an EU strategy for the South Caucasus of 20 May 2010 are linked to credible commitments to **making substantial progress towards the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict**, including, for example, confidence-building measures such as general demilitarisation, the withdrawal of snipers from the line of contact, the withdrawal of Armenian forces from occupied territories surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh and their return to Azerbaijani control;
- stress the right of all internally displaced persons and refugees to return to their home settlements and properties and international security guarantees that would include a **genuine multinational peacekeeping operation** in order to create suitable agreed conditions for the future legally-binding free expression of will concerning the final status of Nagorno-Karabakh;
- stress the utmost importance of democratic, transparent, free and fair competitive elections in this country;
- **recognise Armenia's European aspirations** and consider them as a valuable lever and a necessary catalyst for implementation of reforms;
- incorporate into the Association Agreement clauses and benchmarks on the protection and promotion of human rights which reflect the highest international and European standards.

Other more specific recommendations are made in regard to the following questions:

Human rights: i) urge the Armenian authorities to adopt anti-discrimination legislation that prohibits discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity; ii) encourage the Armenian authorities to pursue the development of civil society.

Fighting corruption: i) stress the importance of the independence of the judiciary, transparent procurement procedures, the separation of politics from business and the need to dismantle oligarchic structures within the economy; ii) emphasise the prevention of and fight against corruption; iii) combat financial crime, corruption, money laundering, and the financing of terrorism; iv) fight impunity for law enforcement officials and the police, inter alia by ensuring that torture and violations of rights in custody and in closed institutions.

Conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh: i) ensure that the Association Agreement is consistent with the principles of international law, namely the non-use of force, territorial integrity and right to self-determination; ii) remind all parties that there can be no alternative to the peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and that any threat to use force undermines the joint efforts of the international community; iii) call on Armenia and Azerbaijan to undertake confidence-building measures along the front lines, including withdrawal of all artillery, as an interim measure, until a multinational peacekeeping force is deployed; iv) strengthen the European Union's conflict-resolution and mediation capacity, inter alia by stepping up its support for the Minsk Group's efforts; (v) emphasise the need for the earliest peaceful settlement of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan on the basis of the principles of international law; (vi) underline the need for unconditional access for representatives of the EU to Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding occupied regions; (vii) call on the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan to act responsibly, tone down statements and refrain from inflammatory declarations in order to pave the way for a genuine dialogue; (viii) express concern about the military build-up in the region and, in particular, about Armenian high military expenditure that drains away resources from more urgent issues such as poverty reduction, social security and economic development, and call, in this connection, on **Member States to stop supplying weapons and munitions to both Azerbaijan and Armenia;** (ix) investigate worrying reports of a settlement-building policy implemented by the Armenian authorities to increase the Armenian population in the occupied territories of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Turkish-Armenian relations: i) step up efforts to facilitate the normalisation of relations, with the subsequent **opening of the frontier without any preconditions;** ii) emphasise the need to use the Association Agreement as a platform to promote regional synergies and cooperation particularly stressing the importance of creating synergies in the areas of transport and energy.

European integration: i) emphasise the importance of mobility in promoting European integration; treat youth and academic mobility as a priority during the negotiations on visa facilitation and readmission agreements; ii) improve public procurement legislation, for the purpose of ensuring good governance and a transparent decision-making process; iii) encourage broad sectoral cooperation between the EU and Armenia and, in particular, promote regulatory convergence; iv) take the necessary action to incorporate in the Association Agreement provisions enabling Armenia to participate in Community programmes and agencies.

Energy cooperation: i) emphasise the need for a sustainable economy, including through the promotion of renewable energy sources and energy efficiency and ensure that the development of the energy sector is carried out in accordance with the EU's environmental standards; ii) reiterate the request to shut down the Medzamor nuclear power plant before 2016 since it cannot be upgraded to meet current agreed internationally recognised standards.

Parliamentary dimension: i) incorporate in the Association Agreement a strong parliamentary dimension which provides for the full involvement of the National Assembly of Armenia and the European Parliament in the implementation and monitoring of the Agreement; ii) incorporate in the Association Agreement clear benchmarks for its implementation and provide for monitoring mechanisms, including the submission of regular reports to the European Parliament; iii) encourage the EU negotiating team to continue the good cooperation with the European Parliament, providing continuous feedback, supported by documentation, on the progress made, in accordance with Article 218(10) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

