EU-Armenia relations

2021/2230(INI) - 15/03/2023 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 534 votes to 10, with 66 abstentions, a resolution on EU-Armenia relations.

Parliament recalled that over more than three decades, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict as well as the recent incursion by Azerbaijan into Armenian sovereign territory have resulted in tens of thousands of casualties, immense destruction and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people. The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has not yet been resolved.

Conflict resolution and normalisation of Armenia-Azerbaijan relations

Members are convinced that durable and sustainable peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan cannot be achieved through military means and the threat of force but requires a **comprehensive political settlement** in accordance with international law. They reaffirmed that, in order to be effective, a comprehensive peace treaty must include provisions that guarantee the integrity of Armenia's sovereign territory, the rights and security of the Armenian population residing in Nagorno-Karabakh and other conflict afflicted areas, and the prompt and safe return of refugees and internally displaced people to their homes.

Parliament strongly condemned the large-scale military aggression by Azerbaijan in September 2022 against multiple places in the sovereign territory of Armenia, which constituted a serious breach of the ceasefire and contradicted earlier commitments, including those made as part of EU-mediated talks as well as military incursions into the internationally recognised territory of Armenia since May 2021.

Reaffirming that the **territorial integrity of Armenia** must be fully respected, the resolution called on the Azerbaijani authorities to:

- immediately withdraw from all parts of the territory of Armenia and to release the POWs under their control;

- remove any obstacles that would hinder freedom and security of movement along the Lachin corridor.

Both Armenia and Azerbaijan are urged to:

- fully implement the tripartite ceasefire statement of 9 November 2020 in all its aspects;

- advance discussions on the **future peace treaty**, to address the root causes of the conflict and to refrain from any steps that could lead to further escalation;

- urgently implement measures to prepare their respective populations for **peaceful coexistence**, including those enhancing people-to-people contact;

- refrain from any hostile rhetoric or actions that may be perceived as inciting hatred or outright violence or as supporting impunity, or that risk undermining the efforts to establish and promote an atmosphere conducive to trust and reconciliation, cooperation and sustainable peace;

- set up a **transitional justice mechanism** as a confidence-building step to achieve lasting peace and reconciliation, with a mandate to establish the fate of missing persons, to repatriate POWs and to invest in establishing historical truths based on a factual assessment of events during the armed conflict which started in 1988.

Enhanced EU involvement

Parliament recalled that the EU's perceived passive stance during and immediately after the 2020 war gave other regional actors, such as Russia, Iran and Türkiye, the opportunity to gain influence in the region. Highlighting that more active European preventive diplomacy could have helped prevent such an outcome, Members strongly support the initiative taken by the President of the European Council Charles Michel to convene and mediate **bilateral meetings** of the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan in Brussels and to mediate.

Members also welcomed the launch of the **EU civilian mission** in Armenia under the Common Security and Defence Policy, and the fact that the EU is providing humanitarian assistance to the conflict-affected populations in and around Nagorno-Karabakh and is playing a leading role in assisting humanitarian demining in the conflict zones. They called for international humanitarian organisations, in particular the UN, to be given access to Nagorno-Karabakh.

The resolution suggested the establishment of a **temporary international guarantee mechanism** for the safety and security of the Armenian population and all returnees to Nagorno-Karabakh. It stressed that both States are under international obligations to conduct independent, prompt, public and effective investigations and prosecute all credible allegations of grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions and other violations of international law and war crimes.

Foreign and security policy

Members support the normalisation of relations between Armenia and Türkiye in the interest of reconciliation, regional stability and security as well as socio-economic development and welcomed the progress achieved so far, including the resumption of flights between the two countries. They called on the EU to actively support this process. Türkiye is encouraged once again to **recognise the Armenian Genocide** to pave the way for genuine reconciliation between the Turkish and Armenian peoples, and to fully respect its obligations to protect Armenian cultural heritage.

The resolution draws the attention of the Armenian authorities to the risks of cooperating with the Iranian authoritarian regime, which, among other crimes and violations, is a supplier of military equipment that is being used by Russia in its war of aggression against Ukraine.

Democratic reforms, rule of law and good governance

Parliament commended Armenia for the significant reforms and the **extensive democratisation process** carried out in recent years and for having become a leading player in democracy in the region. It acknowledged Armenia's effectiveness in fighting crime and corruption, making it one of the safest countries in the region. It encouraged Armenia to continue its efforts to implement reforms and **strengthen democracy, the rule of law and good governance** and invited Armenia to take the necessary measures to better protect human rights, in particular women's rights and the rights of minorities, including LGBTIQ persons.

The Commission and the EEAS are invited to work with the Armenian authorities to combat Russian disinformation, including through increased support to independent media in the country.

Economic and trade relations

The resolution noted that over the last 10 years, the volume of Armenia-EU bilateral trade has been increasing. Armenia, the EU and its Member States, as well as European companies and investors, are encouraged to take the necessary steps to further enhance their economic and trade relations.