



High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President
of the European Commission (HR/VP)
European External Action Service (EEAS)
B-1046 Brussels
Belgium

Brussels, 9 March 2026

Dear High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Union,

We are writing to you in light of a series of recent parliamentary and inter-parliamentary developments which, taken together, call for a reassessment and a strengthening of the European Union's policy towards Azerbaijan.

On **30 October 2025**, the **Political Committee of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly** adopted a resolution expressly recalling "*the need to resolve the outstanding issues of Armenian prisoners in Azerbaijan and displaced Armenians from the former Nagorno-Karabakh autonomous region*". This resolution reflected growing concern within EU–Eastern Partnership parliamentary cooperation regarding Azerbaijan's continued failure to address the consequences of the 2023 military offensive in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Furthermore, the **European Parliament resolution of 18 December 2025 entitled "The detention of opposition figures in Azerbaijan" (procedure 2025/2596(RSP))**, adopted by **477 votes in favour, 7 against and 69 abstentions**, condemned the arbitrary detention and sentencing of political opponents, denounced the deterioration of fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, and called for a firm EU response. The immediate and hostile reaction of the **Azerbaijani Parliament (Milli Majlis) on 19 December 2025**, which publicly rejected the resolution as politically biased and as interference in internal affairs, further underlines the gravity of the situation and the absence of constructive engagement by the Azerbaijani authorities.

Against this background, we remain deeply concerned by four interrelated and unresolved issues:

First, the **continued denial of the rights of Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh**, including the absence of any credible framework for the right of return and the lack of mechanisms for **economic compensation or reparation** for displaced persons.



Second, the continued detention of Armenian prisoners from Nagorno-Karabakh, who on **5 February 2026** were sentenced by a Baku military court to heavy prison terms, including **life imprisonment** for Arayik Harutyunyan, Davit Ishkhanyan, Davit Babayan, Levon Mnatsakanyan, and Davit Manukyan, and **20 years** for Bako Sahakyan and Arkadi Ghukasyan as well as Ruben Vardanyan. These prosecutions under terrorism-related charges violate international humanitarian and human-rights standards, as specifically condemned by the European Parliament in its resolution of 13 March 2025. On **10 February 2026** in a **joint statement by the Chair of the Subcommittee on Human Rights, Mounir Satouri, the Chair of the Delegation for relations with the South Caucasus, Nils Ušakovs, and the Standing Rapporteurs for Armenia and Azerbaijan, Miriam Lexmann and Dan Barna**, expressed deep regret over these verdicts, warned they undermine the climate for peace, and called for the immediate release of all Armenian detainees.

Third, the **systematic repression of political opposition and civil society in Azerbaijan**, as documented in the above-mentioned European Parliament resolution of 18 December 2025.

Fourth, serious and documented concerns regarding Azerbaijan's role in facilitating the circumvention of EU restrictive measures against the Russian Federation, including in the energy sector, as underscored by Council Implementing Regulation (EU) 2025/2588 of 15 December 2025 implementing Regulation (EU) No 269/2014 concerning restrictive measures in respect of actions undermining or threatening the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine, which lists among the designated individuals several persons connected with oil-trading networks implicated in shadow fleet operations — including Azerbaijani nationals Anar Madatli (shareholder and director of 2Rivers Group) and Talat Safarov (executive at 2Rivers/Coral Energy) — as well as other businessmen and entities involved in facilitating Russian oil exports in circumvention of EU restrictions, subject to an asset freeze and other restrictive measures.

In light of these developments, and taking into account the clear parliamentary guidance provided by both the **Euronest Parliamentary Assembly** and the **European Parliament**, we respectfully urge you to consider the following actions:

- **A comprehensive review of the application of the human-rights clause** contained in the EU–Azerbaijan Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, in view of Azerbaijan's persistent and serious violations of fundamental rights.
- The **activation of the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime** in response to documented cases of arbitrary detention, repression of political opponents, and other serious human-rights violations.



- The **urgent convening of the EU–Azerbaijan political dialogue at the highest level**, with a clear agenda addressing the situation of Armenian detainees, the rights of displaced persons from Nagorno-Karabakh, and the rule of law in Azerbaijan.
- The **suspension or freezing of enhanced energy cooperation** with Azerbaijan until tangible and verifiable progress is achieved on human rights, accountability, and compliance with EU restrictive measures.
- **The application of additional restrictive measures to other Azerbaijani legal entities and individuals involved in the circumvention of sanctions to the Russian Federation, including the state-owned SOCAR (State Oil Company of the Azerbaijan Republic)**

We believe that continued engagement without meaningful conditionality risks undermining the credibility of the European Union’s external action and its commitment to human rights, the rule of law and international law. The parliamentary momentum built in October and December 2025 provides a clear political mandate for a firmer and more principled EU approach.

We thank you for your attention to these concerns and stand ready to engage constructively in further dialogue.

Yours sincerely,

Signatories:

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