

51999IP0234

Resolution on support for the peace process in the Caucasus

Official Journal C 175, 21/06/1999 P. 0251

B4-0234, 0275 and 0288/99

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The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the Caucasus, in particular those of 18 June 1987 ((OJ C 190, 20.7.1987, p. 119.)), 18 January 1990 ((OJ C 38, 19.2.1990, p. 81.)), 21 January 1993 ((OJ C 42, 15.2.1993, p. 165.)) and 27 May 1993 ((OJ C 176, 28.6.1993, p. 173.)),

A. whereas the autonomous region of Nagorno-Karabakh declared its independence following similar declarations by former Soviet Socialist Republics after the collapse of the USSR in September 1991,

B. whereas the war has caused serious humanitarian problems, in particular as a result of the displacement of more than one million persons from Armenia, Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan,

C. whereas the cease-fire has generally been respected since 1994,

D. whereas Armenia and Azerbaijan have both expressly applied to join the Council of Europe,

E. whereas the strengthening of democracy and respect for human rights are prerequisites for a peaceful solution to the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh,

F. whereas the presidential elections in Azerbaijan in October 1998 were marked by irregularities and fraud which have been condemned by international observers, and whereas irregularities were also noted during the Armenian presidential elections in March 1998,

G. whereas so far the negotiations on a political solution to the conflict involving Nagorno-Karabakh have not produced a positive outcome,

H. whereas an approach which takes account of all the problems and all the recent political developments in the region is likely to produce a lasting peace,

I. whereas the three Presidents in the Minsk Group representing Russia, the United States and France, who have been instructed by the OSCE to draw up a plan for a lasting peace, have proposed a fair basis for negotiations on a peaceful solution to the conflict,

1. Endorses the peace plan proposed by the Minsk Group;
2. Takes the view that these proposals constitute a basis for discussion likely to end the negotiating deadlock;
3. Calls on the OSCE's Minsk Group to continue its efforts to seek a lasting solution to this conflict;
4. Considers that a strong human rights component should be a part of any verification or observer mission under the auspices of the OSCE sent to Nagorno-Karabakh to ensure a lasting peace and to provide early warning of incidents that could lead to a resumption in the fighting;
5. Considers that aid provided by the European Union to this region must be linked to tangible progress in the areas of human rights and democracy in both countries;
6. Considers that the European Union should increase its assistance under the Tacis-Democracy programme to non-governmental organisations in Armenia and Azerbaijan interested in fostering discussion and political education on issues relating to conflict resolution;
7. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Council of Europe, the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE, the Presidents in the OSCE's Minsk Group, the parliaments of Armenia and Azerbaijan and the representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh.

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