

PRESS RELEASE

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EuFoA welcomes EP Resolution on European Neighbourhood Policy

European Friends of Armenia (www.EuFoA.org) strongly welcomes the new European Parliament (EP) resolution on the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). The plenary adopted the text yesterday, 7 April 2011, which is a review of the Eastern Dimension of the ENP and summarises the EU's policy vis-à-vis Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus*, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

"Today is EuFoA's second anniversary and we are very happy about this present, because the resolution is a strong signal by the EU to support the ENP countries and in particular Armenia. It is also politically courageous as it demands the institution of a new EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and Moldova. It generally demands more efforts to resolve protracted conflicts, and specifically mentions increased contacts with the societies in the breakaway regions, such as Nagorno-Karabakh. We also strongly welcome the EP's support for the ongoing negotiations about Visa Facilitation and the creation of a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area. This text could barely have been better and it is now up to the many decision makers on both sides to put all this into practice." comments EuFoA Secretary General Dr Michael Kambeck.

In the plenary debate, Polish MEP Marek Siwiec (S&D), who was the 'rapporteur' for this resolution, described the success of the ENP and new ambitions: "You can say that in these countries more European values appeared, better legislation is spreading, we can see more concern for the human being, more efficient economies, and we [the EU and the EP] have had our share in all this. [...] We now want to facilitate travelling to the EU, we want the visa system to be easier."

Key points of the EP resolution text:

The resolution "welcomes the progress in relations between the EU and neighbouring countries within the ENP" and stresses "that this process should lead to a further enhancement of the EU's ties with neighbouring countries – all of them have the potential to be the closest of political allies for the EU". The **Association Agreements** are seen as an important tool for stimulating reforms in the partner countries. The need to provide an adequate level of **EU funding** for cooperation with the neighbourhood is underlined in this context, a point particularly important for countries who, like Armenia, cannot base their economic growth on the exploitation of natural resources. The resolution specifically welcomed the work of the **High-level EU Advisory Group**, a unique format first implemented in Armenia which embeds EU experts at the highest level of all key ministries. The idea has

recently been replicated in Moldova and the EP invited the Commission to offer such assistance to more eastern countries.

The resolution notes the EU's stronger engagement in security issues in the Eastern Neighbourhood and calls "on the VP/HR [Catherine Ashton] and the EEAS [the new European External Action Service] to step up their involvement in finding a **solution to the protracted conflicts** in Transnistria and the South Caucasus based on the principles of international law – in particular **non-use of force, self-determination and territorial integrity**" in the framework of the already existing negotiating formats, particularly those of the OSCE. In this context, the EP makes a very important call on "the HR/VP and the EEAS to develop **more confidence-building measures and programmes**, including the launching of new missions and communication strategies to the people and the consideration of pragmatic initiatives and innovative approaches, such as **informal contacts and consultations with the societies** of the breakaway territories". This call is particularly relevant for Armenia, as all breakaway regions already enjoy such programmes, with only Nagorno-Karabakh being largely excluded and isolated. With this call, the EP acknowledges that humanitarian aid and the promotion of civil rights in those areas do not interfere in the peace negotiations and should not be conditioned or inhibited by the conflicting parties. In fact, they are simply about better living conditions for the people concerned and generally create a climate which is less radical and more favourable for conflict resolution. This is in line with a long-standing demand by EuFoA and most other international and domestic NGOs focussing on Armenia and the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood.

*Belarus is not included in the ENP but in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) programme to which the resolution also refers.

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