

Dear Chairman, distinguished delegates of the EPP Political Assembly

On behalf of the Heritage Party, one of the leaders of Armenia's democratic opposition, I have the honor to report the following:

Recently a representative of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) Milica Markovich (Socialist Group) drafted a resolution entitled "*Inhabitants of frontier regions of Azerbaijan are deliberately deprived of water*".

In this resolution Ms. Markovich merely repeated the falsehood of the Aliev regime's official propaganda about so-called "occupation" of Mountainous (Nagorno-) Karabakh and other adjacent areas by Armenian armed forces.

Such a duplicitous approach, which has nothing to do with European values, is especially strange because it has been demonstrated by one who represents Bosnia and Herzegovina, a country which itself was established via exercise of the right of people to self-determination after the collapse of the Soviet system—just as the Armenian people of Nagorno-Karabakh did during the same period. Again and again we are faced with double standards.

Another draft resolution, based on a report by Robert Walter (United Kingdom, EC) approved by the Political Affairs Committee of PACE, is due to be debated by the Assembly at its January 2016 session. It calls for the so-called "*withdrawal*" of Armenian armed forces and other irregular armed forces from Nagorno-Karabakh and the other "*occupied*" territories of Azerbaijan.

And finally, the Report on Functioning of Democratic Institutions in Azerbaijan was prepared in June by the Monitoring Committee, the co-rapporteur of which is Pedro

Agramunt from the Group of the European People's Party in PACE, someone who is well known for his pro-Azerbaijani position. That document as well has falsely and prejudicially referred to *“occupation by Armenia of Nagorno-Karabakh and seven other provinces of Azerbaijan”*.

Such resolutions are unacceptable not only because of undue interference with the OSCE Minsk Group mandate, which is the only legitimate and specialized format for resolving this very sensitive and dangerously explosive issue, and which serves as guarantee of the right of the Nagorno-Karabakh people to self-determination and recognized sovereignty. They do not meet standard also because they encourage Aliev’s despotic regime, which has been very well equipped and armed by the Kremlin during the past years, to start new war in the South Caucasus and to prepare a “legal” if unfounded and unbinding basis for him in such a gamble.

The authors of these resolutions perhaps gain some caviar for serving Aliev’s propaganda, but is Europe ready to pay for this in the form of hundreds of thousands of new refugees on her borders? Does Europe need new destabilization along energy communication routes and rising oil prices? Who will benefit from this? And who is to answer for the continued violation of ceasefire and the escalation of hostilities that take the lives of soldiers and citizens alike--by snipers, long-range rockets, tanks, and other artillery, including the shooting down last year of a Karabakh helicopter on a civilian mission?

By the way, the previous regime in Azerbaijan already had been trying to expel the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh from their homeland, but its aggression was rebuffed by the people of Karabakh who, together with the brave people of Germany who were tearing down the Berlin Wall at the very same time, defended their rights, dignity, identity, unity, and heritage against foreign occupation, thus preventing new genocide.

Indeed, it was Germany which was able to become a great democratic leader by facing itself and its history and recognizing and making full reparation for the Holocaust--most unlike Turkey, Azerbaijan's senior ally, which continues to deny the Armenian Genocide and occupy the Armenian patrimony.

Moreover, in December 2005 the Aliev regime took genocide to a new, anti-cultural level as it annihilated in broad daylight the Christian heritage of the medieval cemetery at Jugha/Julfa, destroying by tractor and explosive a thousand middle-age cross-stones (khachkars), each one a work of art, civilization, and faith. The inability or unwillingness of the EPP, PACE, and the world community to prevent it, to condemn it, or even to send a monitoring mission to the site, now completely leveled and turned into an Azerbaijani military training ground and shooting range, boggles the mind.

Lastly but not finally, Mr. Aliev, who does not hide his visceral hatred of Armenians all over the world, continues at the state level to glorify the convicted murderer in 2004 of a sleeping Armenian student-soldier in Budapest. And today, 20 years after the trilateral (Azerbaijan-Nagorno Karabakh-Armenia) signature of the ceasefire agreement, Azerbaijan once again is trying to achieve the expulsion of the Armenians of Karabakh from their ancestral homeland with the help of some unprincipled and dishonest European politicians.

I would like to strongly encourage PACE members from the EPP to raise their voices in favor of liberty and the rule of rights and to vote against such hypocritical reports and resolutions.

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