

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001126/25
to the Commission
Afroditi Latinopoulou (Pfe)
(17 March 2025)**

Subject: The EU's response to Azerbaijan's unlawful detention of Armenian hostages and the need for consistent human rights policies

The European Parliament resolution of 13 March 2025 strongly condemned Azerbaijan's unlawful detention and sham trials of Armenian hostages and called for targeted sanctions against the Azerbaijani officials responsible for these violations. However, no concrete steps have been taken at EU level to put pressure on Azerbaijan to comply with international law.

Greece has been a steadfast advocate of human rights and the rule of law both within and outside the EU, upholding a principled stance in cases of political imprisonment. However, the EU's response to Azerbaijan's ongoing violations remains weaker compared to the action it has taken in response to other instances of human rights violations, including those concerning Russia and Belarus.

In view of the above, can the Commission answer the following:

1. What specific steps has the Commission taken to ensure the immediate release of the Armenian hostages, in accordance with the European Parliament resolution?
2. Why have targeted sanctions not been adopted against the Azerbaijani officials responsible for these violations, despite Parliament's clear call to action?
3. How does the Commission explain its inconsistent approach, acting with severity in cases of human rights violations in some cases, while avoiding decisive action against Azerbaijan?

Submitted: 17.3.2025

**Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas on behalf of the European Commission
(16 May 2025)**

The rule of law and human rights in Azerbaijan remain a priority for the EU and are at the core of the EU-Azerbaijan bilateral relations. The EU has repeatedly voiced concerns regarding the unsettling rise of arrests of independent journalists, human rights defenders, and political activists on politically motivated charges in Azerbaijan. The EU has called on the Azerbaijani authorities to ensure that their actions adhere to the relevant obligations under domestic and international law. In this context, the EU has consistently called for the release of all persons imprisoned for exercising their fundamental rights. These messages have been conveyed publicly and bilaterally at all levels, including at the level of the High Representative/Vice-President ⁽¹⁾ also during her visit to Azerbaijan on 25 April 2025.

The EU has closely followed the issue of Karabakh Armenian detainees held in Azerbaijan. It is of great importance that Azerbaijan ensures the right to a fair trial and adequate detention conditions, in line with its international commitments. The EU has also advocated addressing these issues as part of confidence-building measures between the parties. Any common foreign security policy decision relating to sanctions is for the Council to make by unanimity.

EU engagement with Azerbaijan remains instrumental in order to promote peace, stability and prosperity in the South Caucasus through regional cooperation, including in the context of the normalisation process between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

⁽¹⁾ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/azerbaijan-statement-spokesperson-human-rights-situation_en;
https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-10-2024-10-22-ITM-020_EN.html;
https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-10-2024-12-18-ITM-019-03_EN.html;
https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/council-europe/1506th-meeting-committee-ministers-11-september-2024-eu-statement-exchange-views-european-committee_en?s=51.