

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003028/26
to the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Maria Zacharia (NI)
(16 July 2026)

Subject: The EU's strategic partnership with Azerbaijan: compatibility with EU Treaty obligations

Articles 2, 3(5), 18 and 21 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) establish binding obligations requiring the EU's external action to be guided by human rights, the rule of law and consistency between its values and external policies. Under Article 18 TEU, the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) must ensure that the common foreign and security policy (CFSP) complies with those obligations.

Nevertheless, the EU continues to deepen its strategic partnership with Azerbaijan through cooperation in energy, transport and Global Gateway connectivity, while Armenian detainees, including former political representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh, remain imprisoned amid concerns regarding arbitrary detention, fair trial guarantees and fundamental rights.

The strengthening of EU-Azerbaijan relations, without any suspension, restriction, conditionality or concrete consequence linked to those detentions, raises serious questions as to whether the EU's external action complies with the Treaties.

1. On what legal basis does the VP/HR consider that the continuation and deepening of the EU's strategic partnership with Azerbaijan is compatible with the obligations laid down in Articles 2, 3(5), 18 and 21 TEU?
2. What restrictive measure, suspension, conditionality or concrete consequence has the EU imposed on Azerbaijan in response to the continued detention of Armenian prisoners? If none, how is that consistent with the Treaties?
3. Has the VP/HR sought or obtained a formal legal assessment confirming that the EU's policy towards Azerbaijan complies with those obligations? If so, will she make it public?

Submitted: 16.7.2026

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas on behalf of the European Commission
(25 August 2026)

The principle of the rule of law and the protection of human rights form an integral part of the EU's relationship with Azerbaijan, which is based on the EU-Azerbaijan Partnership and Cooperation Agreement ⁽¹⁾.

The EU regularly raises these issues with the Azerbaijani authorities, including in discussions on the future development of the relationship.

The EU has closely followed the trials of Karabakh Armenians in Azerbaijan and has emphasised the importance of ensuring due process, the right to a fair trial and appropriate detention conditions, in line with Azerbaijan's international obligations.

The EU has also encouraged Azerbaijan and Armenia to address all outstanding humanitarian issues in the context of their bilateral normalisation process, including through confidence-building measures.

Following the initialling of the bilateral peace treaty between Azerbaijan and Armenia on 8 August 2025, the parties have made important progress towards achieving lasting peace.

This progress has already resulted in several tangible steps to the benefit of both countries, including the release of detainees and the lifting of trade and transit restrictions. The EU strongly supports this process and remains ready to continue assisting the parties in their efforts.

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A01999A0917%2801%29-20091101>.