

Resolution on cultural heritage in Azerbaijan

2006/2527(RSP) - 16/02/2006 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted by 85 votes to 5, with 0 abstentions, a resolution on cultural heritage in Azerbaijan.

The text adopted in plenary was tabled by EPP-ED, PES, Greens/ALE, GUE/NGL, UEN and ALDE groups.

Firstly, Parliament strongly condemns the destruction of the Djulfa cemetery as well as the destruction of all sites of historical importance that has taken place on Armenian or Azerbaijani territory, and condemns any such action that seeks to destroy cultural heritage. It calls on the Council and the Commission to make clear to the governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan that all efforts must be made to stop the practice of ethnic cleansing, which has led to such destruction.

Members demand that the governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan respect their international commitments, notably as regards cultural heritage, and, in particular, those deriving from the two countries' accession to the Council of Europe and their inclusion in the European Neighbourhood Policy. They recall that the European Neighbourhood Policy aims to establish a privileged partnership with Armenia and Azerbaijan on the basis of common values, and stress that respect for minority rights, including historical, religious and cultural heritage is conditional on the genuine development of the European Neighbourhood Policy, which must also lead to the establishment of good neighbourly relations between all the countries concerned.

Parliament demands that Azerbaijan allow missions, who are dedicated to protecting archaeological heritage, in particular Armenian heritage, onto its territory, and that it also allow a European Parliament delegation to visit the archaeological site at Djulfa.

The resolution invites the Commission and the Council:

- to incorporate a clause on protecting both territories' invaluable archaeological or historical sites into the action plans currently being discussed in a European Neighbourhood Policy context;
- to make the implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy action plans conditional upon the respect by Armenia and Azerbaijan for universally accepted principles, in particular their obligations as members of the Council of Europe regarding human and minority rights, and to incorporate into these action plans specific provisions for the protection of the cultural heritage of minorities.