



## **EU-ARMENIA CIVIL SOCIETY PLATFORM**

**6th meeting, Yerevan, 1 April 2025**

### **JOINT DECLARATION**

The EU-Armenia Civil Society Platform (EU-ARM CSP) is one of the bodies set up within the framework of the European Union-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA). It enables civil society organisations (CSOs) from both sides to monitor the implementation process and prepare recommendations for the relevant authorities.

The 6th meeting of the EU-ARM CSP was held on 1 April 2025 in Yerevan, Armenia.

**With regard to the implementation of the CEPA and the progress of EU-Armenia relations in general, the EU-Armenia Civil Society Platform:**

1. Welcomes the adoption by the Armenian parliament of the Law on Starting the Process of Armenia's Accession to the EU introduced by the 'Eurovote' civic initiative following the collection of 60 000 citizen signatures; with a view to effective implementation of this Law, calls on the Armenian Government and the European Union to agree on a feasible roadmap of implementation of the Law, including by establishing an Interagency Commission comprised of line ministers, headed by the Prime Minister;
2. at the same time, reiterates its call on the Armenian authorities to exhaustively fulfil the commitments remaining under CEPA within the shortest possible timeframe, considering the fact that CEPA is not only a framework agreement between two partners, but first and foremost a catalyst for turning Armenia into a true democracy and leading it towards EU membership;
3. in view of the commitment undertaken by both the EU and Armenia under CEPA to promote, preserve and strengthen peace and stability at both regional and international level, welcomes the possibility of achieving a peace agreement with Azerbaijan; fully conscious of the sensitivities of this process, calls on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia to consult the Armenian civil society on the text of the peace agreement with Azerbaijan; calls on EU to exert strong diplomatic pressure on Azerbaijan to sign and observe the peace agreement without adding further demands to the mutually agreed text;

4. calls on the EU to exert any possible leverage on Azerbaijan to put an end to the unlawful detention and sham trials of Armenian hostages, including high-ranking political representatives from Nagorno Karabagh in line with Resolution RC-B10-0182/2025<sup>1</sup> of the European Parliament;
5. welcomes the decision of the EU Member States and their allies to consolidate amid recent global political developments which have contributed to the global spread of anti-European sentiment and disinformation, often coupled with support for a capital-centric and strength-based world order, as well as to the feeling of decreasing security in Europe and the world. Particularly, in such challenging times, calls on European and Armenian governments to commit more intensively and consistently to deepening their relationship and fully implementing reforms aligned with the European agenda, and to express interest to be a part of the newly forming European common security area;
6. observes with deep concern the growing vacuum of technical and financial assistance, combined with a decline in the informational and ideological promotion of liberal democratic values, exacerbated by recent developments in the USA and certain EU Member States. This situation provides fertile ground for increased Russian and Chinese influence globally, including within the EU Neighbourhood area. We urge the EU, its Member States and European institutions to enhance their international presence through cooperation and aid, thus counteracting the potential environment of growing illiberalisation;
7. reiterates that effectively and sustainably developing and introducing democracy in a country is only possible in conditions of peace, security and stability; in this respect, notes that it is essential to increase pressure and diplomatic leverage on Azerbaijan to refrain from any future military aggression against Armenia and any military rhetoric in the country;
8. continues to keep the visa liberalisation dialogue between Armenia and the EU, and the process of meeting the EU benchmarks, crucial for future visa-free travel for Armenian citizens to the EU with regard to documentary security, border and migration management, data protection, the fight against corruption and organised crime, and the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms under close scrutiny; in the light of this, calls on the Armenian authorities, including the National Assembly, to keep this Platform involved in the process of visa liberalisation dialogue;
9. appreciates the crucial role played by the EU Monitoring Mission for the security of Armenia in reducing the number of Azerbaijani attacks on Armenian territory and welcomes the extension of its mandate beyond 2025; welcomes the readiness of the EU side to further support Armenia under the European Peace Facility, as well as other bilateral initiatives directed at strengthening Armenia's defence capabilities;
10. welcomes the negotiations between Armenia and the EU on the new cooperation agenda, including the regular consultation process initiated by the Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs with civil society, including the EU-Arm CSP; reiterates its call to share the text of the document with civil

---

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/B-10-2025-0182\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/B-10-2025-0182_EN.html).

society to make sure that the latter's recommendations are considered before the final document is signed;

11. indicates that in order to continue advising on CEPA and monitoring the Armenian government's implementation of CEPA and the proposed upgrade of the cooperation agenda between Armenia and the EU, the EU-ARM CSP will need continued support, including through direct funding from the European Commission and the Armenian government; expresses concern about insufficient funding of this Platform, preventing it from performing to its full potential in 2024;
12. stresses the critical importance of improving the engagement, consultations and the exchange of information between authorities and CSP members. Proposes granting CSP members permanent, or at least an observer status within the Interagency Commission responsible for CEPA implementation;
13. is concerned about the speed of implementation and strongly encourages stepping up efforts to ensure that the Government fully, effectively, and within established deadlines, fulfils its commitments outlined in strategies aimed at improving public administration, including anti-corruption, judicial and legal systems, human rights protection, law-enforcement, penitentiary and probation services, etc.;
14. is concerned about the speed of the steps taken by the Armenian authorities in carrying out the country's obligations under the Rome Statute; whilst it was the Government's undertaking in 2024 to implement the Rome Statute by drafting the Law on Cooperation with the Criminal Court, with the change of the Minister of Justice, it was decided to include the provisions on cooperation with the ICC in the existing Law on Mutual Legal Cooperation; however, no legislation implementing the Rome Statute at national level has been adopted to date;
15. calls on the authorities to prevent selective appointments and justice within disciplinary proceedings by the Supreme Judicial Council, and to rectify the failure to take adequate note of the negative integrity checks in judicial appointments;
16. whilst the efforts of the Armenian Government to combat corruption are noted, several problematic issues remain unresolved; whilst the anti-corruption institutional framework has been established with the Corruption Prevention Commission, Anti-Corruption Committee, specialised Prosecutor's Office units, and a three-tier Anti-Corruption Judicial System, serious concerns persist regarding the independence of these anti-corruption bodies, staff selection processes and professional development, inadequate working conditions, technical equipment and resources;
17. expresses hope that, in the upcoming short timeframe, the work to improve the institution of confiscation of illegally obtained property will commence with the participation of all competent bodies, including the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia, the National Assembly and the Constitutional Court, in light of the advisory opinion provided by the Venice Commission;
18. additionally, corruption vulnerabilities in the private sector and public procurement remain areas of concern. The business environment continues to face integrity challenges, whilst insufficient oversight of public finance expenditure remains a problematic area requiring attention;

19. notes with concern the continuing practice of use of excessive force by police and lack of effective investigation of human rights violations committed by the police;
20. welcomes the compliance with the technical procedure leading to the authorisation for Armenia to export to the EU Member States high-quality aquaculture fish farming products under Commission Regulation (EU) 2025/354, in line with the country's intended policy of economic diversification;
21. notes with regret that Armenia's road accident-related fatalities remain the highest among European and Eastern Neighbourhood countries and urgently calls for intensified efforts to significantly improve overall road and vehicle safety standards;
22. acknowledges ongoing policy reforms in Armenia's transport sector but calls for more rapid adoption of CEPA provisions aimed at reducing vehicle emissions, implementing regular and effective vehicle inspections – including unscheduled roadside checks, improving regulations on the transportation of hazardous materials and establishing practical and rigorous oversight of socioeconomic and labour conditions for drivers;
23. regretfully concludes that despite numerous previous calls from trade unions and the CSP, no progress has been achieved in establishing an institutional and legal framework to ensure workers' rights to consultation and bargaining. This includes the absence of a legally binding and meaningful national tripartite mechanism for all sectors, a bipartite mechanism specifically for public-sector employees, and an overall enhancement of trade union bargaining rights. Effective social dialogue is among the most critical international standards currently lagging behind in implementation, yet it is essential for ensuring stability and democratic legitimacy in the majority of policy reforms;
24. highlights the lack of progress in the State's commitment, backed by the RA Government Action plan and other strategic documents, to protect the independence of and to empower worker's organisations in central and local governments;
25. emphasises that the most comprehensive employment-related provisions of CEPA – specifically commitments regarding occupational safety and health (OSH) – remain unfulfilled, with no clear deadlines set for their implementation. Given that most CEPA provisions are expected to be fully implemented by 2028, it is imperative to immediately launch OSH reforms accompanied by a clear, robust roadmap to ensure timely and effective implementation;
26. once again reiterates that illegal employment (employment without a labour contract) continues to be one of Armenia's major labour issues, while regulatory enforcement bodies, notably the Health and Labour Inspection Body, remain ineffective in addressing such violations, even when clearly reported and documented by citizens. Urges a substantial reform of the legal and operational frameworks for oversight and inspection, which is essential to address systemic corruption and widespread informal employment practices across various sectors;
27. welcomes certain social stimulus measures recently introduced by the government through income tax refund schemes; however, stresses the necessity of implementing a fair, transparent and evidence-based wage determination mechanism. Furthermore, it is critical to adjust the minimum

wage to accurately reflect real-life consumption demands and define a genuine living wage. In this context, we propose committing to adopting additional European standards, particularly the EU Adequate Minimum Wage Directive, possibly integrating this commitment into the New Cooperation Agenda;

28. highlights the importance of enabling the institutional and meaningful social dialogue in Armenia to effectively and constructively resolve social and labour challenges in the framework of the national tripartite commission, including the working time reduction reform, adoption of occupational safety and health (OSH) standards, as well as other pillars of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Decent Work Agenda, including ILO Recommendation R116, as provided by CEPA Articles 84 and 274, and international labour standards;
  29. notes that, over the past year, several social reforms initiated by the government have triggered significant pushback and societal tensions, largely because of an inadequate communication of the rationale behind these reforms; believes that the root cause of this problem is the absence of proper, meaningful, and inclusive consultations among stakeholders and social partners; reiterates the critical importance of conducting effective and constructive social dialogue, exchanging expertise and analysis, and appropriately utilising well-established international experiences at the earliest stages of policy development, thereby preventing future failures and societal disruptions;
  30. emphasises the importance of SME sustainable growth and development both in Yerevan and in the regions; therefore the new SME Development Strategy should focus on SME growth in regions ensuring the creation of necessary infrastructure and support tools for SMEs, since most economic activity remains concentrated in Yerevan. The insufficient involvement of SMEs in the industry sector results in the weak diversification of exports and slow integration into EU value-chains requiring more aggressive market-access strategies;
  31. observes that the Republic of Armenia has made tangible progress in implementing CEPA Chapter 5 through regulatory reforms, SME support programmes and alignment with EU standards. However, persistent challenges such as financial inaccessibility, regional inequality and institutional weaknesses require further sustained efforts. As regards regulatory alignment, further efforts are needed to fully adopt EU standards (e.g. environment, safety norms), particularly for manufacturing sectors.
-