



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Permanent Council no. 1314 Vienna 20 May 2021

#### **EU Statement on captives from the recent conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan**

The European Union is following closely the worrying developments along the Armenia-Azerbaijan border. We call on both sides to exercise the utmost restraint and de-escalate the situation.

The European Union welcomes the consolidation of the ceasefire on the ground, following the trilateral agreement reached by the parties on 9 November 2020, as well as some positive results achieved on issues such as the repatriation of human remains and the provision of humanitarian assistance to populations severely affected by the conflict.

The European Union reiterates, however, that renewed efforts are necessary to build confidence between both countries and make progress towards sustainable peace. This includes refraining from hostile and offensive rhetoric and cooperating on important issues such as missing persons and demining, including the sharing of any available maps of minefields in order to enable the return to areas devastated by the conflict. It also includes finalizing, without further delay, the return of all remaining prisoners of war and detained persons, regardless of the circumstances of their arrest.

In this context, the EU wishes to recall that the European Court of Human Rights case law has clearly established that States Parties to the European Convention on Human Rights are under an obligation to comply with interim measures.

The EU reiterates its full support for the Minsk Group and its Co-Chairs to achieve a comprehensive and lasting settlement of the conflict. We also reaffirm our support for the Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office.

The EU remains fully committed to the efforts to achieve lasting peace and to foster prosperous developments in the region and stands ready to contribute to this, including through the EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia, in particular as regards the implementation of confidence-building measures.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\*, SERBIA\* and ALBANIA\*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

\* Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.