

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR EXTERNAL POLICIES
POLICY DEPARTMENT



WORKSHOP

**NAGORNO - KARABAKH:
SECURITY SITUATION**

AFET



DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR EXTERNAL POLICIES OF THE UNION

DIRECTORATE B

**POLICY DEPARTMENT
WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE
SUB-COMMITTEE ON SECURITY AND DEFENCE**

NAGORNO KARABAKH: SECURITY SITUATION

WORKSHOP

Held on Wednesday 20 June 2012

14.30 - 16.30

Room: Altiero Spinelli (ASP) 3E2

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1. PROGRAMME

14.30 - 14.35	<i>Introductory remarks</i> Chair of SEDE meeting
14.35 - 14.50	<i>Introduction to the Nagorno-Karabakh security situation</i> Tracey GERMAN , Defence Studies Department, King's College London
14.50 - 15.05	<i>Countries briefing on Armenia and Azerbaijan</i> Dr. Adam EBERHARDT , Deputy Director, Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW), Poland
15.05 - 15.20	<i>EU approach and instruments: a role for the EU</i> Dennis SAMMUT , Executive Director of LINKS, London Information Network on Conflicts and State-building.
15.20 - 15.35	<i>Overview</i> Philippe LEFORT , EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia
15.35 - 16.25	<i>Discussion, Q&A</i>
16.25 - 16.30	<i>Concluding remarks</i> Chair of SEDE meeting

2. SUMMARY REPORT

2.1 Introductory remarks



Arnaud DANJEAN, *Member of the European Parliament*, introduced the debate by emphasising the gravity of the Nagorno-Karabakh crisis and the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group to negotiate a peaceful resolution of the conflict. Arnaud DANJEAN stressed that the workshop aimed at providing an objective view of the current status of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

2.2 Introduction to the Nagorno-Karabakh security situation



Tracey GERMAN, *King's College London*, briefly described the history of the conflict and its most recent developments. She argued that the Azeri-Armenian dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh dates back from the early 1920s, when Stalin decided to assign the region to the Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan. During the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the controversy escalated into open conflict. The war lasted from 1988 until 1994, when a ceasefire was signed. At this point, the Armenian military controlled Nagorno-Karabakh and several neighbouring districts. Nearly two decades after the ceasefire was signed, tensions have not subsided. A sniper war is taking place along the line of contact, which could escalate again into full-scale armed conflict. There have been regular exchanges

of fire, casualties on both sides and mutual accusations of ceasefire violations, which are very difficult to verify for third parties due to lack of access to the conflict zone.

Tracey GERMAN stressed that arms spending in the region has increased. Most recently, the Armenian parliament has agreed to raise the defence budget. Azerbaijan's army is twice bigger than Armenia's. Baku can count on Turkish economic and political support, while Armenia relies on Russia's backing. In August 2010 Azerbaijan and Turkey concluded a strategic partnership, including military and economic cooperation. A strategic partnership exists also between Yerevan and Moscow; the Russians have 3,000 troops in Armenia. Furthermore, Yerevan has a relatively good relationship with Iran and is a member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). The CSTO is led by Russia and guarantees mutual military support if a member state is attacked.

According to Tracey GERMAN, the Armenian and Azeri strategic partnerships with third parties complicate the conflict and its geopolitical implications. However, an Azeri attack on Armenia is unlikely now. If a war broke out, the Azeris would most probably limit it to the Nagorno-Karabakh region. A war would endanger the energy infrastructure located in the South Caucasus. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline runs close to Nagorno-Karabakh and could be disrupted in case of war. The precedent of the August 2008 Russo-Georgian war showed the serious economic consequences inherent in a military conflict in the region. Material damage in Georgia was estimated to be approximately one billion dollars, excluding the long-term loss of investors' confidence.

2.3 Countries briefing on Armenia and Azerbaijan



Adam EBERHARDT, *Center for Eastern Studies, Poland*, focused on the positions of Armenia and Azerbaijan regarding the conflict. He argued that the militaristic rhetoric in both countries has resulted in increased tension on the line of contact. According to Adam EBERHARDT, an accidental war cannot be ruled out. Nagorno-Karabakh has no economic or strategic significance, but it has great symbolic and historic value for both Armenia and Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan lost 16% of its territory in the 1988-1994 war. Current Azeri leaders consider this loss as evidence of a past weakness that has now been overcome and should be avenged. The large group of refugees from Nagorno-Karabakh, making up 8% of the total Azeri population, constitutes another reminder of the 1988-1994 war.

Refugees have not settled because Baku is keen on having them as evidence that the conflict has not been resolved.

Conversely, Armenia sees victory in the 1988-1994 war as a source of pride. Yerevan also boasts an influential diaspora in the United States, France and Russia. However, its strategic position is difficult, as the country is sandwiched between Turkey and Azerbaijan. According to Adam EBERHARDT, the picture is made more complex by the nature of the relationship between Armenia and the local authorities of Nagorno-Karabakh. Yerevan enjoys considerable leverage over Nagorno-Karabakh, as the latter's existence depends on Armenian assistance. The Azeris believe that their sovereignty over Nagorno-Karabakh shall be restored and are confident that they would prevail if a new war was fought. The Armenians think that the conflict has already been settled and have no intention of seeking a compromise with the Azeris.

Thanks to its oil and gas revenues, Azerbaijan was able to buy new weapons. Its strategic importance is growing for Russia, the EU and Turkey. In 2012 Baku's military budget was 3 billion dollars, as opposed to 130 million dollars in 2003. It is larger than Armenia's whole state budget and eight times bigger than Armenia's and Nagorno-Karabakh's military budgets combined. Israel is Azerbaijan's main military supplier. Adam EBERHARDT stressed that these data are corroborated by publications of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. From an Azeri perspective, growth in Baku's relative economic and military power is not accompanied by satisfactory progress in negotiations, which leads to frustration and to the intensification of militaristic propaganda. This in turn induces Armenia to become more intransigent and uncompromising. Azeri president Ilham Aliyev stated that Baku is ready to recover control of Nagorno-Karabakh by force. According to Adam EBERHARDT, the Armenian armed forces would be ready for a well-organised defensive campaign. The balance might change in favour of Azerbaijan in 3-4 years, when the country will have deployed the new military supplies from Israel. On the other hand, energy infrastructure constitutes Azerbaijan's weak point. An air strike could paralyse this essential source of income.

Adam EBERHARDT concludes by arguing that growing tensions could be seen as an Azeri attempt to unfreeze the conflict and prepare for full-scale war. However, a military confrontation is still risky for Baku. Russia's stance in case of conflict is not predictable and the Aliyev regime might come under domestic pressure from the opposition. War is more likely in the medium and long term but an earlier accidental war cannot be ruled out.

2.4 EU approach and instruments: a role for the EU



Dennis SAMMUT, *LINKS*, *London Information Network on Conflicts and State-Building*, discussed possibilities for EU involvement in conflict resolution. He argued that a new war in Nagorno-Karabakh would be more deadly than the previous one, as both Armenia and Azerbaijan possess more powerful military equipment. According to Dennis SAMMUT, the interests of the European Union in the area concern primarily regional stability and the security of the South Caucasian energy corridor. In case of war, the ensuing humanitarian crisis would involve also the EU. Brussels thus needs to engage proactively in conflict resolution. The EU does not need to replace the OSCE Minsk Group, but can make its relations with Armenia and Azerbaijan more conditional to progress in

conflict settlement. The office of the Special Representative for the South Caucasus is the EU's main instrument on the ground. The European Parliament can engage the two sides, through the Euronest mechanism. Moreover, the EU has delegations in both countries and is involved in negotiating partnership agreements.

Dennis SAMMUT argued that the EU can also contribute to confidence building measures, but these are not a panacea, as they cannot replace conflict resolution and require the acquiescence of the two sides to succeed. Among his recommendations, Dennis SAMMUT particularly stressed that the EU needs to show active involvement in conflict resolution. It also needs to fully grasp the serious threat which the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict poses for its neighbourhood and its borders.

2.5 Overview



Philippe LEFORT, *EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia*, provided a summary of the conflict's history and the EU's role therein. He stated that the peace process is led by the OSCE Minsk Group, a highly confidential negotiation forum. The 1994 ceasefire was mediated by Russia, which was later joined by the US and France in the peace talks. Negotiations went through different phases. In the late 1990s the United States pushed forward the talks. In the early 2000s, French President Jacques Chirac took over this role. After 2010 Russia's renewed efforts and President Medvedev's direct involvement proved extremely useful. Negotiations led to the definition of the Madrid principles for the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, including:

the return of part of the territories occupied by the Armenian army to Azerbaijan (namely the area that Armenians call 'security zone'); the deployment of a peace-keeping operation; a corridor linking Armenia to the rest of Nagorno-Karabakh; the determination of Nagorno-Karabakh's final status by a referendum; the right of return for refugees; international guarantees for the peace settlement. Philippe LEFORT argued that the principles leave crucial questions unresolved. For instance, they do not specify when the referendum would take place, nor which countries would be entitled to participate in the peace-keeping mission.

Philippe LEFORT then discussed the EU's current role in the conflict. The recent Conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council and the European Parliament's resolutions on negotiations with Armenia and Azerbaijan constitute the key texts. The Council Conclusions emphasised the EU's concern about slow progress in negotiations and increased tensions. They stressed the EU's support of the Minsk Group and of the Madrid principles and urged the parties to implement the cease-fire and confidence building measures. They also highlighted the need for EU representatives to access the conflict zone and develop post-conflict scenarios. The Parliament's resolution stressed that progress in the negotiations

concerning the Association Agreements between the EU and both Armenia and Azerbaijan should be linked to the parties' commitment to the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Philippe LEFORT argued that the EU bases its actions on the UN and the Paris Charters. Brussels would like to get more involved, but needs the consent of both parties. Currently, skirmishes on the contact line have increased. The risk of full-scale conflict is limited in the short term, but stronger in the medium run. Regrettably, both countries are looking for alternatives to the Madrid principles. For instance, Azerbaijan's strategy is based on increasing its military power in the region. In this context, the EU can invest on confidence building measures, use the peace-building and peace-making experience acquired in the Balkans and Georgia and present the prospect of a peaceful future to the local population.

3. DISCUSSION

Following the four presentations, the floor was opened for questions and comments from Members of the European Parliament.

Milan CABRNOCH emphasised that a war over Nagorno-Karabakh could destabilise the whole region. The EU can actively contribute to the peace process following the Madrid principles. The withdrawal of Armenian troops from the Azeri territories surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh should be the first principle to be implemented.

Krzysztof LISEK stated that confidence building measures are important and inquired about the panellists' opinion on the mutually hostile public debates in Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Norica NICOLAI argued that the EU should find alternatives to the Minsk Group and to the French approach to conflict resolution. Tensions or conflicts in strategically more important areas could distract the international community from Nagorno-Karabakh, thereby giving one of the parties the opportunity to launch a new war. The EU should act based on its interests and have a proactive attitude similar to the one adopted in the Balkans.

Justas Vincas PALECKIS inquired about the United States' and China's approach to the conflict and whether it conflicts with the EU's.

Indrek TARAND stated that some EU Member States sell weapons to the warring parties and asked whether this hinders the work of the EU Special Representative.

Charles TANNOCK said that Euronest was unsuccessful and that the EU should become more involved in conflict resolution because of its energy interests. A crisis in the region would have an impact on global energy prices. It would also result in tragic loss of human lives and a flow of refugees to Europe. There are dangerous similarities with the 2008 Russian-Georgian crisis, such as the fact that the international community has not devoted sufficient attention to the conflict.

Michael GAHLER stressed that the European Parliament will not take sides. According to him, Russia would benefit from a war to act as peace-maker and defend its interests in the post-Soviet space. The EU can only continue to support negotiations in the Minsk Group and the implementation of the Madrid principles.

Maria Eleni KOPPA argued that both parties are happy with the status quo. The Armenians do not want to withdraw from the occupied territory, while the Azeris are buying time and acquiring further revenues from the export of fossil fuels. She also asked whether the EU Special Representative shares the view that a full-scale war is close.

Ivo VAJGL stated that at the moment there are an occupier and an occupied country. Conflict settlement should re-establish the respect of international law. The EU should have a dialogue with both countries, but it should not send the message that it has accepted the Armenian occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh with Russian backing.

Vytautas LANDSBERGIS emphasised the need for a new vocabulary allowing clear communication on the subject. The line of contact is actually a line of fire. Russia desires the continuation of the conflict to keep Azerbaijan under control and should not be considered as a peace-maker. The military budget of Russia should also be taken into account in the assessment of forces on the ground. According to him, Armenia is a Russian protectorate and the territories in question are not disputed, they are occupied.

Evgeni KIRILOV stated that the European Parliament is largely in favour of a greater EU role in the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, particularly due to the experience of the 2008 war in Georgia. However he was sceptical about Armenia's and Azerbaijan's support for increased EU involvement. He asked the Special Representative what role he would conceive for the EU.

Andrey KOVATCHEV suggested that conflict settlement is hindered by the party that benefits from the current situation. He argued that investments in democracy and human rights are important because they help prevent a new military escalation.

Anna IBRISAGIC emphasised the similarities between the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute and the Balkan crisis of the 1990s, including the context of occupations and requests of self-determination. Ending the occupations is a precondition for the return of refugees. The EU should not close its eyes before the 'Armenian threat'.

Following the comments and questions from the floor, the Chair gave all panellists the opportunity to provide answers and make concluding remarks.

Tracey GERMAN argued that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict cannot be resolved without taking into account the interests of Russia, Turkey, Iran, the US and the EU. They all have a role in promoting stability and, at times, instability. There were several attempts to have a stability pact for the region, but they all failed because they excluded essential actors. According to GERMAN, a new pact should include all actors involved. The Minsk Group is not a perfect negotiation framework, but a debate on changing its composition would distract the international community from the main objective, namely resolving the conflict. She concluded by arguing that the status quo does not benefit the Armenian population, which faces an extremely difficult economic situation.

Adam EBERHARDT noted that the United States is keeping a low profile in the Nagorno-Karabakh question due to its strong Armenian lobby, which also influenced the decision to restrict US arms sales to Azerbaijan. China has not been actively engaged so far, but this is likely to change. For instance, Beijing will attempt to acquire part of the energy resources in the area. EBERHARDT also reiterated that Azerbaijan's defence budget is undoubtedly larger than Armenia's.

Dennis SAMMUT stated that the EU can support dialogue in civil society between and within Armenia and Azerbaijan. The EU has leverage because it is a model for both Armenia and Azerbaijan and has soft power. Investments in the democratic development of the countries must be made. He conceded that Russia has an ambivalent role, being simultaneously a mediator and Armenia's main military ally. However, the EU needs to engage Russia in order to make its contribution to conflict resolution more constructive.

Philippe LEFORT concluded the workshop with some remarks on the main issues discussed. According to him, political elites in Azerbaijan and Armenia are still guided by the images of the 1988-1994 war and have not realised the destructive potential of their current weapons. Russia is the first arms provider

of both countries, but it would not gain any advantage from a full-scale conflict in this area. Moscow has recently sent a plea for moderation. A stronger Russia than in the 1990s may contribute to greater stability in the region. LEFORT stressed that the EU cannot make miracles, as its involvement in conflict resolution is limited and depends on the consent of both parties. A final resolution of the conflict will be very difficult to achieve unless Armenia and Azerbaijan relax their current stance.

4. ANNEXES

The annexes that follow list the experts' power point presentations during the workshop.

Presentation by Tracey GERMAN: 'Introduction to the Nagorno-Karabakh security situation'



THE SECURITY SITUATION AROUND NAGORNO-KARABAKH: AN INTRODUCTION

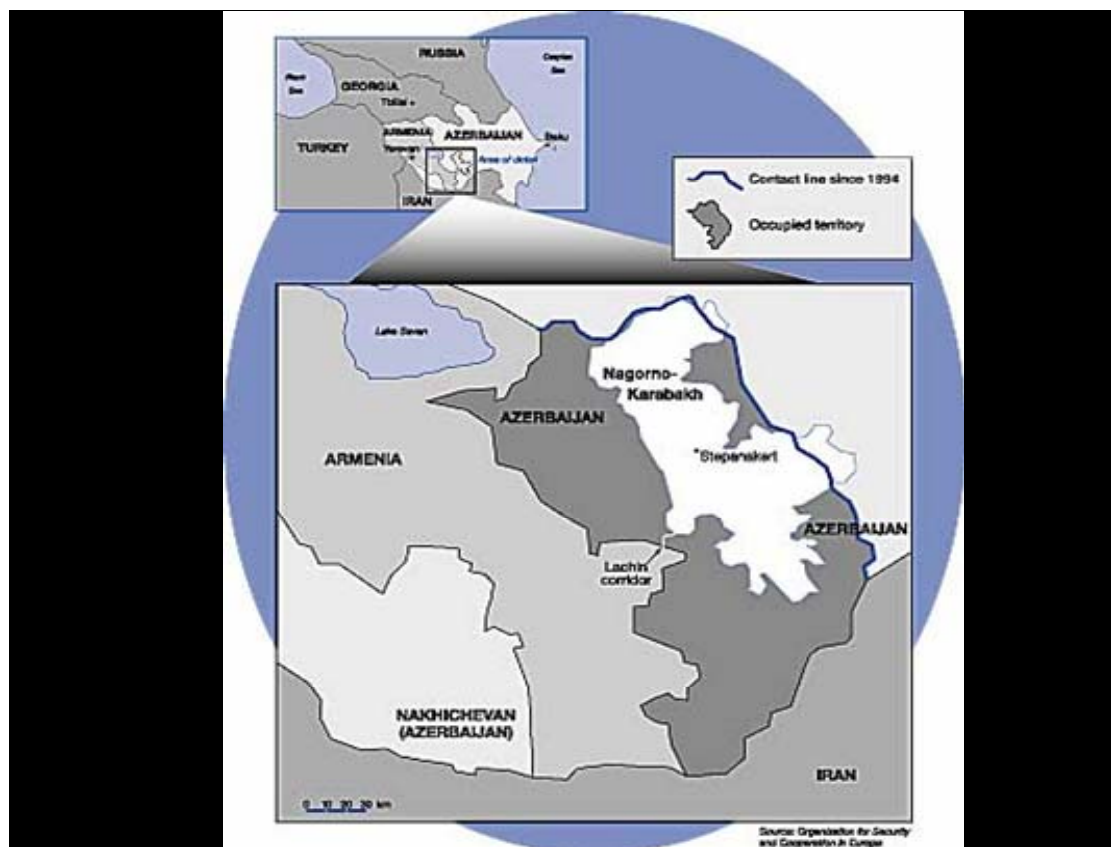
Dr Tracey German
King's College, London



Nagorno-Karabakh

- Majority-Armenian populated secessionist region of Azerbaijan
- 1992-1994 war between Armenian-backed Karabakhis and Azerbaijan
- Deep historical roots: 'Karabakh is the last outpost of [Armenian] Christian civilisation and a historical haven of Armenian princes and bishops before the eastern Turkic world begins. Azerbaijanis talk of it as a cradle..., the birthplace of their musicians and poets.'

Thomas de Waal
Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan through Peace and War





Nagorno-Karabakh

- Ceasefire, but not a 'frozen' conflict: 1000s of deaths along front-line since 1994
- Dominates domestic and foreign policies of both Armenia and Azerbaijan
- Armenia has strategic partnerships with Russia and Iran
- Azerbaijan-Turkey 2010 Strategic Partnership and Mutual Assistance Agreement
- South Caucasus = key transit route for Caspian hydrocarbons

Presentation by Dr. Adam EBERHARDT: 'Countries briefing on Armenia and Azerbaijan'

Nagorno-Karabakh: security situation
Countries Briefings on Armenia and Azerbaijan

Dr. Adam Eberhardt
Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW), Warsaw
www.osw.waw.pl

Brussels, 20.6.2012

DOES KARABAKH MATTER?

- No economic potential, natural resources or strategic importance
- Symbolic and historical significance (national mythology)

PERCEPTIONS

Azerbaijan

- 16 per cent of its territory occupied
- 600,000 internal refugees in Azerbaijan
- Evidence of the state's weakness
- Factor of social consolidation

Armenia

- The victorious war overcoming a strong 'victim mentality'
- Anti-Turkic sentiments (role of the Armenian diaspora)
- National pride and factor of modern identity
- Factor of social consolidation

ARMENIA-KARABAKH INTERDEPENDENCE

- No recognition of Karabakh's independence
- Armenia representing Karabakh in the peace process (but cannot impose its will)
- Armenia → Karabakh
 - political, economic and military assistance
 - social links
- Armenia ← Karabakh
 - ruling elite

CURRENT POSITIONS

Azerbaijan

- Control of the disputed territories must be restored
- People expect war to resume with Azerbaijan's final victory
- The government neither wishes to nor can ignore public opinion

Armenia

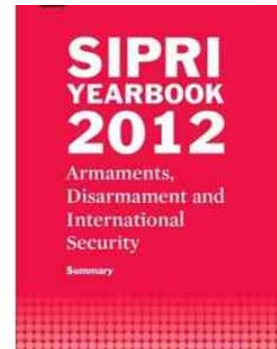
- People regard the conflict as having been already settled
- No intention to seek compromise with Azerbaijanis
- Little room for negotiations

BALANCE OF POWER

- Azerbaijan's oil revenues
 - \$ 20 billion in 2011
 - growing strategic importance for the EU, Turkey and Russia
- Azerbaijan's military spending
 - exceeded \$ 3 billion in 2011 (compare to 130 million in 2003)
 - 15 percent of budget expenses
 - 6 percent of GDP
 - this is **more than Armenia's entire state budget**

*Azerbaijan made the **largest real percentage increase (89 per cent) in military spending in the world in 2011**, amidst increasing warnings of renewed conflict with Armenia over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region*

*Stockholm International
Peace Research Institute*



Source: <http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/milex>

AZERBAIJAN: 'STATUS QUO FATIGUE'

- Feeling of power not accompanied by progress in negotiations on Karabakh
- Growing frustration among political elite and more militarist propaganda as a result
- A widening gap between expectations and reality
- Consolidation of an uncompromising Armenian position as a result
- **A strong resistance by Armenians and Azerbaijani to any concessions**

*I have repeatedly stated that our **patience is not unlimited**. The negotiating process must have its own limits including time. And in the event that we become convinced 100% that **negotiations are not leading anywhere**, we have the full right under international legal norms, to **restore integrity by any means up to war**, and we will not hide this fact. We must be prepared for this, and **we will be ready**.*

Ilkham Aliyev, 2007

Source: www.news.az



IS AZERBAIJAN 'READY'?

- **Armenians – the dominating party in the Karabakh conflict:**
 - Control of the disputed territories
 - Strong military forces
 - **Political and military support of Russia**
 - Karabakh – the most powerful tool Moscow has in its policy vis-a-vis Azerbaijan (and Armenia)
 - Medvedev's involvement
 - 'The Georgian lesson' (Aug 2008)

GROWING TENSIONS

- Growing tensions
 - Preparations for war – **conflict unfreezing**
 - Pressure on Armenia and the international community
- **War is still a risky option for Azerbaijan's political elite**
 - It is unlikely that Baku would secure Russia's friendly neutrality
 - A defeat would pose a risk of internal breakdown

PROSPECTS

- The chance that a compromise can be reached is minimal
- **The military conflict almost prejudged in the longer term**
 - Shift of the balance of power
- **'Accidental war' cannot be ruled out**
 - Scale of the tension
 - The unstable situation in the region and around it

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Nagorno-Karabakh – conflict unfreezing
OSW COMMENTARY
2011-10-26 | Aleksandra Jarosiewicz and Krzysztof Strachota
The conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh poses the greatest challenge to the security and stability of the Southern Caucasus. Although a ceasefire has been in place and a peace process under way since 1994, there is growing concern that the threat of the resumption of military action is growing.
Proof of that is provided by, for example, the arms race dictated by Azerbaijan and its use of war rhetoric. A major factor, in addition to Azerbaijan's increasing potential and ambitions, which is destabilising

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Presentation by Philippe LEFORT: 'Overview'

SEDE workshop Nagorno-Karabakh 20 June 2012

Overview

- Peace process
- EU policy
- Current situation & Outlook

SEDE workshop Nagorno-Karabakh 20 June 2012

Peace process

- Minsk Group
 - US, FR, RF phases
 - Madrid Principles - international unity on the way forward:
 - (1) return of the occupied territories surrounding NK,
 - (2) interim status for NK guaranteeing security and self-governance
 - (3) corridor linking Armenia to NK
 - (4) final status of NK to be determined in the future by a legally-binding expression of will
 - (5) right of all internally displaced persons and refugees to return
 - (6) international security guarantees, including a peacekeeping operation
- (2010 Muskoka)

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EU policy:

- Political declarations (e.g. FAC Conclusions 27.02.2012, EP resolutions on AR/AZ AA negotiations 18.04.2012)
- Appointment of new EUSR to South Caucasus and crisis in Georgia
- Confidence-building measures (e.g. Benefits of Peace, EPNK-2)
- EU as a model and alternative to geopolitical competition
- Principled policy, no “double standards”

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FAC Conclusions:

- Concern at slow progress in AR-AZ negotiations to resolve NK conflict
- Continued support of Minsk Group, Madrid principles
- Concern on increased tension along the frontlines; urge to implement ceasefire and to adopt appropriate confidence building measures
- Readiness for enhanced support by confidence building measures
- Need for unconditional access for EU representatives
- Council invites High Representative and Commission to develop post conflict scenarios for Nagorno-Karabakh as basis for future EU engagement

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EP resolutions 18.04.2012

- Recommendatory nature, yet of political weight:

Council, Commission and EEAS... “should ensure that negotiations ... on the Association Agreements ... are linked to credible commitments to making substantial progress towards the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict”

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EUSR mandate (NK):

- Prevent conflicts in the region in accordance with existing mechanisms
- Contribute to peaceful conflict settlement
- Support conflict settlement implementation in accordance with principles of international law
- Engage constructively with main interested actors concerning the region
- Encourage and support further cooperation between AR, AZ and GE and, as appropriate, their neighbouring countries
- Enhance the Union's effectiveness and visibility in the region

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Current situation & outlook:

- CBM dilemma: people-to-people vs. security/military CBMs
- Both sides consider alternatives to compromise / Madrid Principles
- Security situation: Use of force and status quo unacceptable: support for respect of 1994 ceasefire and establishment of OSCE-proposed investigation mechanism

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