

Brussels, 01 October 2020

Statement of the Steering Committee of the EaP CSF on the recent escalation of conflict in Nagorno Karabakh

The EaP CSF Steering Committee views the recent escalation of conflict in the Nagorno Karabakh region with grave concern. Accordingly, it calls for the European Union to take concrete steps to promote meaningful negotiations leading to a peaceful solution between Armenian and Azerbaijani sides.

On the morning of Sunday 27 September, the heaviest fighting in years between Armenian and Azerbaijani sides began along the line of contact of the disputed territory Nagorno Karabakh, and continued during the following days. Both sides report losses among military personnel and civilians, as well as the shelling of settlements. It is estimated that more than 100 people have died since the conflict erupted.

Martial law and military mobilisation have been declared in Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh, while Azerbaijan has imposed military rule and a curfew in large cities and shut down Internet in many parts of the country. Clearly, this situation poses a number of direct and indirect security concerns in any sphere of peaceful activity.

The European Union has already issued a [statement](#) calling for an immediate cessation of hostilities, de-escalation and for strict observance of the existing 1994 ceasefire. Russia has also called for an immediate end to the violence and for talks to stabilise the situation, while Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has pledged support for Azerbaijan.

Given the clear security implications of the conflict between Armenian and Azerbaijani sides over the Nagorno Karabakh region on the local population, it is vital to implement all necessary steps to stop military actions, end the violence and continue peaceful negotiations.

Indeed, with the human rights of innocent civilians being consistently violated and bloodshed being justified for the sake of power games, we strongly believe that this serious endangerment of human security can only be addressed by the restoration of stability, and the pursuit of a sustainable and peaceful solution by means of negotiation in good faith. If these violent conflicts continue, they pose a threat not only to the countries directly implicated, but also to their neighbours, entire regions and the international community.

Therefore, the Steering Committee:

- Strongly condemns all attempts to resolve the conflict through military means;
- Calls on the conflicting parties to implement immediate actions to end the violence on the line of contact, re-establish dialogue, and undertake all the steps necessary for the resumption of peaceful negotiations;

- Urges both sides to pursue confidence-building mechanisms and gestures of good faith that will result in a reduction of tension in the Nagorno-Karabakh territory in a long term perspective. Formally requesting the support of an EU Monitoring Mission to support the peace-building process could be one such step;
- Calls on external actors to refrain from unilateral actions unless they contribute to peaceful negotiations

***Members of the Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership
Civil Society Forum***