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Recommendations

Lala Jumayeva and Mikael Zolyan

The recent change of the government in Armenia presents a unique chance for “restarting” the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process.

To policy makers in Armenia and Azerbaijan

The governments of both sides of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict should improve the negotiating climate by moderating their militarist and antagonistic rhetoric and eliminating hate speech and hostile discourses. The Armenian and Azerbaijani leaderships should strive to increase the transparency of the peace process and ensure the inclusion of the societies in the peace process through various dialogue programs. While progress in the negotiations may seem unlikely in the short term, a change of rhetoric, and, subsequently, a change of the atmosphere around the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process, can be gradually advanced.

More specifically, the governments should

- Capitalize on the “restart” opportunity to advance the peace process on official and unofficial levels;
- Stop further military build-up;
- Limit/decrease/eliminate bellicose rhetoric from government officials;
- Advance alternative discourse to militarist and pro-war discourses in the media;
- Create a joint council of Armenian and Azerbaijani journalists that will develop a code of ethics for covering the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict;
- Initiate a meeting of the first ladies of Azerbaijan and Armenia and encourage the collaboration of women’s groups, including

those representing the Azerbaijani and Armenian Nagorno-Karabakh communities;

- Engage in and encourage environmental cooperation.

To the European Union

- In their dialogue with the governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan, the EU should encourage the Armenian and Azerbaijani officials to drop the aggressive militaristic rhetoric and shift toward a more constructive language, free of hate speech and threats of violence.
- The European Union should further promote and advocate for conflict transformation measures in its dialogue with the Armenian and Azerbaijani governments.
- To help build the local peace constituency, donor agencies should consider decentralizing funding allocated for the realization of the peacebuilding initiatives and expand the number of organizations from the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone involved in the process.
- In order to support the NK peace process the EU should implement more focused peace-building activities. The following projects can be implemented within the framework of the Eastern partnership (EaP) program:
 - The activities of the EPNK should be continued;
 - The peacebuilding activities should be strengthened via implementation of vocational (professional) exchange trips both to Armenia and Azerbaijan where an exchange of ideas, knowledge, experience and culture could be provided. The aim of these trips will be adding a non-political dimension to the peace process.