
OPINION: EUROPE SPEAKS TO AZERBAIJAN WITH DIFFERENT VOICES

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The spring of 2026 has produced one of the strangest split-screen moments in EU foreign policy. On 30 April, the European Parliament adopted yet another resolution sharply critical of Azerbaijan, embedded inside a text on supporting democratic resilience in Armenia. Within forty-eight hours, the Milli Majlis of Azerbaijan suspended cooperation with the European Parliament across all areas, withdrew from the EU [] Parliamentary Cooperation Committee, and initiated procedures to leave the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly. By President Ilham Aliyevs count, this is the fourteenth such resolution adopted against Azerbaijan since May 2021 [] a record he described as a kind of obsession.

And yet, in the same weeks, an entirely different European policy was unfolding in Baku. On 11 March, European Council President António Costa visited Azerbaijan, calling it a partner of strategic importance to the EU and announcing work on a new framework agreement that would broaden cooperation beyond energy into security, defence, digital, and transport. On 21 [] April, Latvian President Edgars Rinkēvičs paid an official visit, signing fresh cooperation documents and reaffirming the Latvia [] strategic partnership. From 26 to 28 April, Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babiš chose Azerbaijan as his first destination outside the EU during his current term, leaving Gabala with the contours of a deal under which the Czech Republic plans to import roughly 2 billion cubic metres of Azerbaijani gas a year. On 25 April, in his first wartime visit to the South Caucasus, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky landed in Gabala and signed six bilateral agreements, before publicly proposing Azerbaijan as a venue for trilateral talks with Russia and the United States. And on 4 May, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni [] the first Italian premier to visit Baku in thirteen years [] described Azerbaijani gas and oil as decisive for the energy security of Italy and announced permanent political coordination between the two governments. The next day, EU High Representative Kaja Kallas arrived in Baku to advance what she called a more structured partnership, noting that Azerbaijan is a valued and reliable energy partner and that connectivity between the EU, the South Caucasus, and Central Asia is in our shared strategic interest.

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