



Conference of European Churches
Conférence des Églises européennes
Konferenz Europäischer Kirchen
Конференция Европейских Церкве

GENSEC-2022-139

Mr Josep Borrell Fontelles

High Representative of the European Union
and Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Vice-President of the European Commission
cab-borrell-fontelles-contact@ec.europa.eu

Brussels, 14 September 2022

Your Excellency,
Dear Mr Borrell,

The Conference of European Churches (CEC) would like to express its deep concern over this week's renewed conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia. CEC is following with great interest the efforts of the European Union to establish sustainable peace in the Caucasus region in these two countries and we are asking the EU to take up the necessary steps to avert further escalation and re-establish a ceasefire conducive to the search for a lasting peace in the interest of the wellbeing of people, and the protection and enjoyment of human rights and freedoms needed for prosperity of all ethnic and religious communities and all people living in the region.

Due to the reignition of clashes between two neighbours the Conference of European Churches would like to invite the EU to continue its mediation processes reinforced in May, making more efforts to solve the challenges raised over missing persons and prisoners of war, and to resolve pending issues over the border and humanitarian issues as well. Each side is very proud of its own cultural heritage. Therefore we would urge the EEAS that its bilateral dialogues include the topic of the protection of cultural and religious heritage between two sides reflecting the dignity, identity and integrity of their nations.

In this regard, we would like to invite the European Union to engage with and encourage religious communities in both countries to develop stronger interreligious and intercultural dialogue among each other, building supportive funding programs within the framework of the EU Eastern Partnership Cooperation. The trust that religious communities can create and develop would be a good seed to support long-term sustainable peace among the neighbours and benefits for all people living in both countries. It is vital to engage religious communities in the enabling process of an inclusive search for lasting reconciliation as they can bring messages of hope, faith and love when addressing the root causes of the renewed and previous hostilities. It is of utmost importance to find the space for greater involvement of women and youth in

BRUSSELS

Rue Joseph II, 174
BE-1000 Brussels, Belgium
tel.: +32 2 230 17 32
fax: +32 2 231 14 13
e-mail: cec@cec-kek.be

STRASBOURG

8, rue du Fossé des Treize
FR-67000 Strasbourg, France
tel.: +33 3 88 15 27 60
fax: +33 3 88 15 27 61
e-mail: cec-strasbourg@cec-kek.be

www.ceceurope.org



Conference of European Churches
Conférence des Églises européennes
Konferenz Europäischer Kirchen
Конференция Европейских Церкве

bringing gender and generational perspective to efforts that could much easier bring the future as the focus of the settlement instead of the resentments of the past.

In this way they can contribute to the strengthening of human rights, peace and justice for all people in the region. Also, we would use this occasion to encourage the European External Action Service to include religious communities of both countries in the discussion over the content of the achievement of peace as they can contribute to the protection of human dignity of all people touched by this conflict.

We would also like to draw to your attention the outcomes of the recently-concluded 11th Assembly of the World Council of Churches which discussed the unresolved situation following the last Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in 2020, and we would urge stronger support by the EU for the work of the OSCE Minsk Group and all members of the international community to encourage, support and facilitate meaningful dialogue for a sustainable peace in the region.

We remain open and indeed committed to any exchange on the issue.

Sincerely,

Dr Jørgen Skov Sørensen
General Secretary

Copy to:

Adriano.MARTINS@eeas.europa.eu

BRUSSELS

Rue Joseph II, 174
BE-1000 Brussels, Belgium
tel.: +32 2 230 17 32
fax: +32 2 231 14 13
e-mail: cec@cec-kek.be

STRASBOURG

8, rue du Fossé des Treize
FR-67000 Strasbourg, France
tel.: +33 3 88 15 27 60
fax: +33 3 88 15 27 61
e-mail: cec-strasbourg@cec-kek.be

www.ceceurope.org