



**Azərbaycan Respublikasının Səfirliyi / Avrupa Birliyi yanında Nümayəndəliyi
Ambassade de la République d'Azerbaïdjan / Mission auprès de l'Union Européenne
Ambassade van de Republiek Azerbaïdjan / Missie bij de Europese Zaken**

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Explanatory Note

The Azerbaijani side expresses astonishment and regret regarding the position of the European Parliament on situation of “Armenian cemeteries and historic carved stone crosses in southern Nakhichevan”, reflected in its resolution “European Neighborhood Policy” of January 19, 2006.

The Azerbaijani side declares in this regard that allegations made by Armenian side about demolition of graves and cross-stones in Chuga cemetery of Julfa region in the Nakchyvan Autonomous Republic of Azerbaijan are totally groundless.

This is not the first time that the Armenian side tries to delude the international community, referring to the tactic of groundless accusations. The reasons for that are obvious, including, among others, the atrocities committed by the Armenian troops in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, where no single Azerbaijani historic and/or cultural monument has been left undamaged and practically no holy place escaped desecration. Most of mosques in the occupied territories have been purposefully destroyed and burnt down, many of them turned into warehouses and stalls. Numerous historical, cultural, religious monuments and pieces of art, which had been ruthlessly removed from the occupied Azerbaijani territories by Armenian Armed Forces, were put on sale in the auctions and shops throughout the world. The attributes of Azerbaijani cultural property, their national, geographical origins and identity have been disrespectfully changed.

As for the historic carved stone crosses in Chuga cemetery of Julfa region in Nakchyvan they were created in Caucasian Albania, where the Christianity had been the state religion until Arab invasion of VII century, by Caucasian Albanians, one of the ancestors of Azerbaijani ethnos. The gravestones and the inscribed patterns on them are deeply rooted to the period of Christianity Azerbaijan lived through. All the people irrespective of nationality and belief were buried in this Albanian Christian cemetery. It is to be underscored that the ancient Albanian cemetery in Chuga village of Nakhchyvan has been registered as the archeological monument and is protected by the state. The claims on the monuments destruction by Azerbaijan is nothing more than the attempt to justify the barbaric actions perpetrated by Armenian Armed Forces in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan towards the historical, cultural and religious heritage of Azerbaijan.

All the relevant appeals of Armenian side to UNESCO and other appropriate international organizations did not bring any results. This is mainly due to the fact that no serious and self-respecting organization will entertain further baseless claims of the country-aggressor, which is

responsible for brutal violation of the norms and principles of international law, including legal obligations on protection of the world historical, cultural and religious heritage.

It is sorrowful that such an esteemed EU Institution as the European Parliament can express its position on the basis of untried and unfounded information, which could undermine its credit and authority in opinion of its constituency as well as the people of the neighboring countries. Therefore, the Azerbaijani side hopes that the further approach of the European Parliament to such kind of sensitive issues will be thorough and well-grounded and relies on close cooperation in this regard with all European Institutions, and the European Parliament in particular.

Brussels, 26 January 2006