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to the

Proposal for a COUNCIL DECISION

on the position to be taken on behalf of the European Union within the Cooperation Council established by the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Azerbaijan, of the other part, with regard to the amendment and extension of the EU-Azerbaijan Partnership Priorities

ANNEX

RECOMMENDATION No XX/2026 OF THE EU-AZERBAIJAN COOPERATION COUNCIL

approving the amendment of the EU-Azerbaijan Partnership Priorities and their extension to the period 2026-2030

THE EU-AZERBAIJAN COOPERATION COUNCIL,

Having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Azerbaijan, of the other part, and in particular Article 81 thereof,

Having regard to Recommendation No 1/2018 of the EU-Azerbaijan Cooperation Council of 28 September 2018 on the EU-Azerbaijan Partnership Priorities (2018-2020),

Having regard to Recommendation No 1/2021 of the EU-Azerbaijan Cooperation Council of 22 December 2021 on the extension of the EU-Azerbaijan Partnership Priorities to the period 2021-2024 [2023/830],

Whereas:

- (1) The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Azerbaijan, of the other part (the ‘Agreement’) was signed on 22 April 1996 and entered into force on 1 July 1999.
- (2) In accordance with Article 81 of the Agreement, the Cooperation Council may make appropriate recommendations to attain the objectives of the Agreement.
- (3) In accordance with Article 98 of the Agreement, the Parties to the Agreement are to take any general or specific measures required to fulfil their obligations under the Agreement and are to see to it that the objectives set out in the Agreement are attained.
- (4) The European Union and Azerbaijan endorsed on 28 September 2018 the EU-Azerbaijan Partnership Priorities for the period 2018-2020.
- (5) The European Union and Azerbaijan extended on 22 December 2021 the EU-Azerbaijan Partnership Priorities to the period 2021-2024.
- (6) The EU and Azerbaijan will bilaterally take into account in the Partnership Priorities long-term objectives and deliverables to be agreed between them in the context of the Eastern Partnership,

HAS ADOPTED THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATION:

Article 1

The Cooperation Council recommends amending the EU-Azerbaijan Partnership Priorities, renaming them Strategic Priorities for the EU-Azerbaijan Partnership, and extending them to the period 2026-2030, as set out in the annex.

Article 2

This Recommendation shall take effect on the day of its adoption.

Done at Brussels,

For the Cooperation Council

The European Union

The Republic of Azerbaijan

ANNEX

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR THE EU-AZERBAIJAN PARTNERSHIP (2026-2030)

I. CONTEXT

1. With a view to further strengthening their relationship, in 2018, the European Union and the Republic of Azerbaijan adopted a first set of EU-Azerbaijan Partnership Priorities, which expired in 2024. The document outlined a shared vision for enhancing the partnership. This vision rested upon four priority areas, namely good governance, economic development, connectivity and people-to-people contacts.
2. The implementation period of the document coincided with unprecedented global and regional challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, geopolitical developments, and compounded food, health and energy crises. These developments underscored the strategic importance of EU-Azerbaijan partnership, particularly in increasing resilience across critical sectors.
3. The joint press statement of 11 March 2026 by President Ilham Aliyev of the Republic of Azerbaijan and President António Costa of the European Council, issued on the outcomes of the latter's visit to the Republic of Azerbaijan, emphasised the strategic importance of EU-Azerbaijan relations and underlined the importance of adopting renewed EU-Azerbaijan Partnership Priorities and advancing the bilateral agenda in all areas. The statement by President Ursula von der Leyen of the European Commission with President Ilham Aliyev of the Republic of Azerbaijan, issued on the occasion of President von der Leyen's visit to the Republic of Azerbaijan on 1 July 2026, underscored the importance of deepening EU-Azerbaijan relations and announced the launch of the EU-Azerbaijan Connectivity Partnership. These engagements were built upon intensified high-level contacts and mutual visits between the sides, including the holding of EU-Azerbaijan dialogues on security, energy and transport.
4. There is a shared understanding that new Strategic Priorities for the EU-Azerbaijan Partnership are needed to further equal and mutually beneficial EU-Azerbaijan partnership on the basis of adherence by both Parties to their respective obligations and commitments under international law, including the UN Charter, inter alia, the

principle of territorial integrity and non-interference in internal affairs, while reflecting key national, regional and global economic and political developments since the signing of the EU-Azerbaijan Partnership Priorities in 2018.

5. The end of the armed conflict and restoration of Azerbaijan's sovereignty and territorial integrity paved the way for peace between Azerbaijan and Armenia and has been a defining milestone for the South Caucasus. The historic progress in the peace process between Azerbaijan and Armenia was marked by the signing of a Joint Declaration by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, witnessed by the President of the United States of America, and the initialling of the bilaterally negotiated Agreement on Establishment of Peace and Inter-State Relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia on 8 August 2025, in Washington D.C., United States of America. This historic development opened new perspectives for the South Caucasus region and beyond, enhancing also the EU-Azerbaijan partnership in areas of mutual interest, while adding to the necessity for adjusting Azerbaijan-EU partnership in line with emerging needs, priorities and challenges.
6. Azerbaijan has embarked on large-scale post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation works in conflict-affected territories, including humanitarian demining. Reintegrating these territories into the national economy will bolster regional growth by facilitating new connectivity projects. However, the large-scale landmine and unexploded ordnance contamination have been hampering these processes, delaying reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts and posing a serious humanitarian threat. While the EU is the largest international donor in the field of humanitarian mine action in Azerbaijan, the scale of the threat posed by landmine contamination necessitates intensified support and cooperation in this field.
7. Notable other developments since the adoption of the last Partnership Priorities include the launch of the Trans Adriatic Pipeline in 2020, as the final segment of the Southern Gas Corridor. It has since ensured that Azerbaijani gas is delivered directly to a growing number of EU Member States. Azerbaijan is thus increasing its role as a reliable energy partner by contributing to the EU's energy security and diversification strategy. This cooperation was further strengthened through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on a Strategic Partnership in the Field of Energy between the President of the European Commission, President Ursula von der Leyen,

and the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, in Baku in July 2022. This Memorandum of Understanding sets ambitious targets for increasing gas supply from Azerbaijan to the EU, including supporting the conditions for the expansion of the Southern Gas Corridor in accordance with commercial viability and market demand, based on long-term, predictable and stable contracts, and expanding collaboration on electricity interconnection, energy efficiency and clean energy, including hydrogen and renewables, in line with the EU's medium- and long-term decarbonisation goals.

8. As the Middle Corridor, also called Trans-Caspian Transport Corridor (hereafter: TCTC), emerges as an increasingly critical transport and transit connection between Europe and Asia, which was also reflected in the EU's Cross-Regional Connectivity Agenda, the prospects for the EU-Azerbaijan partnership have significantly increased, due to Azerbaijan's indispensable role as a key hub for multimodal connectivity. In line with shared interest in promoting connectivity, the Parties will establish the EU-Azerbaijan Connectivity Partnership and the EU-Azerbaijan High-Level Dialogue on Connectivity to explore opportunities for long-term cooperation to promote secure, predictable and efficient trade and transit along this Corridor, including through infrastructure development, logistics, digitalisation of processes and soft connectivity measures. The Parties will also work on the organisation of a regional connectivity investment conference in Baku bringing together partner countries.
9. Following the end of the conflict, Azerbaijan has embarked on the large-scale reconstruction of its transport infrastructure with a plan to finalise road and railway infrastructure up to its border with Armenia by the end of 2027. The implementation of the 'Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity' (TRIPP), as envisioned in the Joint Declaration signed on 8 August 2025 in Washington D.C. and will provide unimpeded connectivity between the main part of the Republic of Azerbaijan and its Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic while further expanding the transit capabilities of the TCTC for international transportation.

To further complement this route, EU-Azerbaijan cooperation in the development and modernisation of railway transport infrastructure in the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic of the Republic of Azerbaijan will significantly enhance the functionality of the TCTC, including through the development of new cross-border transport links.

10. There is also growing momentum for increased cross-border connectivity in the energy sector. The EU and Azerbaijan share a common aspiration to increase cooperation in ensuring a stable, secure and reliable energy supply, as well as in advancing clean energy, energy efficiency and electricity interconnections. With its vast renewable energy potential, particularly in solar and offshore wind, Azerbaijan has positioned itself at the core of several planned green energy interconnectors and envisions the trade and exchange of green electricity between the Parties, in line with applicable market rules, and with Türkiye and other regions.

In this context, Azerbaijan plays an important role in regional connectivity and develops the Central Asia-Azerbaijan Corridor, Caspian-Black Sea-Europe Green Energy Corridor, Azerbaijan-Türkiye electricity interconnector (via Nakhchivan and TRIPP) and Azerbaijan-Georgia-Türkiye-Bulgaria Energy Corridor projects that can contribute to energy security, energy and data transmission, diversification and decarbonisation objectives.

11. The Agreement on a Strategic Partnership in the field of Green Energy Development and Transmission between Azerbaijan, Georgia, Romania and Hungary, signed on 17 December 2022 in Bucharest in the presence of Heads of State and Government of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Romania and Hungary and the President of the European Commission, provided additional momentum for regional electricity connectivity by laying the groundwork for the Caspian-Black Sea-Europe Green Energy Corridor project, which provides for additional submarine cable capacity in the Black Sea as well as the expansion of overland interconnections.

A parallel fibre-optic communication cable (FOC) planned along the electricity cable route could provide secure communication links and will enhance regional digital connectivity.

The Caspian-Black Sea-Europe Green Energy Corridor project applied for inclusion in ENTSO-E's Ten-Year Network Development Plan (TYNDP) in May 2025, with the final publication expected by the end of 2026. Project participants aim to submit an application for PCI/PMI status.

The Parties will further assess the complementarity of the Caspian-Black Sea-Europe Green Energy Corridor project with the EU's Global Gateway strategy. In this context, cooperation opportunities for EU companies might emerge, including, but not limited

to, participation in supply chains and contracts for the construction of critical infrastructure and the provision of equipment, offtake arrangements and project development frameworks during the post-feasibility stage.

12. From 2024 to 2025, Azerbaijan held the presidency of the 29th UN Climate Change Conference (COP29), which, besides underscoring its commitment to climate action, brought parties together to accelerate action towards the Paris Agreement's 1.5C target and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and marked the start of a new era for climate finance. The conference took place in Baku from 11 to 24 November 2024 and focused on the preparation and submission of strong national plans, climate finance, high-integrity carbon markets under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, addressing loss and damage. Azerbaijan's presidency and hosting of COP29 fostered a new era of cooperation with the EU in the multilateral climate space and can be a building block for enhanced EU-Azerbaijan joint activities in the field of climate action and sustainability, in line with the objectives of the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement.
13. Azerbaijan faces several intensifying environmental and climate-related challenges. Severe droughts and increasing water scarcity have placed significant pressure on its agriculture sector, while the country is heavily dependent on transboundary water flows for its freshwater management. Climate vulnerability, inefficient water use, pollution and seawater intrusion further underscore the urgency of adopting integrated water resource management strategies taking into account EU best practices.
14. The EU and Azerbaijan place a strong emphasis and cooperate on attaining the objectives of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, including the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals, and multilateral environmental agreements, including those to which they are party, such as the UNFCCC, the Convention on Biological Diversity of 1992, the Paris Agreement of 2015 and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework of 2022.

Moreover, the EU and Azerbaijan are stepping up their efforts to address the interlinked global challenges of climate change, environmental degradation, biodiversity loss and pollution, poverty and inequality by supporting international climate efforts and sustainable development ambitions.

15. International cooperation in research and innovation (R&I) is a strategic priority for both the EU and Azerbaijan. Strengthening EU-Azerbaijan cooperation in R&I would be an important factor and a driver for the green and digital transition at a time when Azerbaijan is keen to boost and diversify its economy, thereby increasing its competitiveness and setting up a knowledge-based economy.
16. As outlined in the ‘Azerbaijan 2030 strategy’, in February 2021, Azerbaijan adopted five national priorities for socio-economic development to guide the country’s progress over the next decade. The priorities include a steadily growing, competitive economy, a dynamic, inclusive society based on social justice, areas of competitive human capital and modern innovations, the great return to the territories liberated from occupation and a clean environment of green growth. This opens up a broad range of cooperation opportunities between the EU and Azerbaijan, including: (i) fostering a steadily growing and competitive economy; (ii) an improved business climate; (iii) R&I and human capital development; and (iv) advancing green growth and environmental sustainability.

II. Priorities

17. The EU-Azerbaijan partnership will be aligned with the renewed Strategic Priorities. It will cover enhanced partnership in areas of mutual interest and shared benefit, such as sustainable and diversified economic development and efficient public service delivery; clean energy, climate resilience, environmental sustainability and civil protection; connectivity, smart infrastructure and reconstruction; human development, mobility and innovation.

All activities included in this document will be designed and implemented in accordance with the principles of human rights, good governance, and rule of law, with particular focus on ensuring inclusivity, environmental sustainability, and climate resilience.

18. The areas for political, economic and technical cooperation outlined below are not exhaustive. Cooperation between the EU and Azerbaijan can span a wider number of areas, in particular, connectivity. All areas of cooperation can be pursued both bilaterally and multilaterally.
19. Both Parties will regularly assess the implementation of the Strategic Priorities to ensure the achievement of the agreed objectives. Relevant stakeholders will also be

encouraged to contribute to assessment of its implementation. The Parties will maintain regular dialogue to address the issues that may arise from the implementation of the Strategic Priorities through bilateral consultations and in good faith, including exchanges on relevant regional and international developments that may affect their implementation.

20. The Parties will utilise existing institutional framework and dialogue mechanisms, including those under the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, and explore opportunities to further enrich their bilateral dialogue on all issues of mutual interest and shared benefit. The Parties further agree to resume and expedite the negotiations on a new EU-Azerbaijan bilateral agreement, with a view to replacing the existing Partnership and Cooperation Agreement.

1. Sustainable and Diversified Economic Development and Efficient Public Service Delivery

21. The Parties recognise that sustainable development encompasses economic development, social development and environmental protection, with all three being interdependent and mutually reinforcing.
22. The Parties will promote the development of a resilient, sustainable, knowledge-based and diversified economy in Azerbaijan. In this context, cooperation will support structural reforms, economic growth, and integration into global and regional value chains.
23. The EU and Azerbaijan will deepen their cooperation on facilitating trade, including customs modernisation, interoperability of IT systems and regulatory compatibility, taking into account the best practices of both Parties. Support will be provided for strengthening trade-related infrastructure and logistics under the TCTC to ensure resilient supply chains and greater connectivity between Europe and Asia.
24. Trade cooperation should aim to simplify trade and reciprocal investments in crucial sectors, including energy, transport, digital, agriculture and industry, in line with the mutual priorities and the 18 July 2022 Memorandum of Understanding on a Strategic Partnership in the Field of Energy between the EU and Azerbaijan. In addition, the Parties will work to strengthen predictability for long-term energy cooperation, including through dialogue on investment needs for infrastructure and supply consistent with market demand and energy security. The Parties will boost their trade

and investment relationship in a way that contributes to: (i) sustainable development and inclusive growth; (ii) support for a green transition; and (iii) promoting responsible and sustainable value chains.

25. The EU will support Azerbaijan during its negotiations process on the accession to the WTO.
26. The Parties will jointly support innovation and entrepreneurship, with a particular focus on developing start-ups and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. Targeted support measures and public-private partnerships will improve access to finance and investment in strategic sectors.
27. In the spirit of the ‘Azerbaijan 2030: national priorities for socio-economic development’, which recognise a ‘sustainably growing competitive economy’, a ‘clean environment’ and a ‘country of green growth’ among the five national priorities, the EU will promote and support the adoption and implementation of low-emission and sustainable practices in Azerbaijan’s industry and agriculture. Efforts will also be made to continue to improve the business climate through attracting the EU private sector and investments, and to boost competitiveness.
28. Cooperation in this area will also aim to strengthen public administration and efficient public service delivery. The EU will support the implementation of Azerbaijan’s new Competition Code and will continue to support Azerbaijan in producing high-quality official statistics and sharing best practices on governance and evidence-based policymaking. The Parties recognise that the inclusive involvement of civil society in implementing these priorities is essential. The Parties will also strengthen cooperation in fighting fraud affecting the financial interests of the EU and Azerbaijan.
29. The Parties recognise the importance of digital transformation for improving public administration and will cooperate on digitalising public services to enhance efficiency, transparency and accessibility for individuals and businesses. The Parties agree to continue cooperating in the fight against money laundering and the financing of terrorism.
30. The European countries and the Republic of Azerbaijan will promote the exchange of experience in the field of Industry 4.0 and will facilitate cooperation between technology companies in this area through the implementation of relevant collaborative initiatives.

2. Clean Energy, Climate Resilience, Environmental Sustainability and Civil Protection

31. The Parties will deepen their strategic energy partnership through building on the EU-Azerbaijan Dialogue, developing the Southern Gas Corridor and its future expansion in line with market and investment conditions, and through regional and inter-regional electricity transmission projects.

The Parties also underline the importance of long-term, predictable and stable energy contracts to ensure the economic feasibility of the development of the required production and export infrastructure investments, in order to underpin security of demand for producers, exporters and infrastructure owners, and security of supply for importers and buyers in line with the regulatory requirements.

This cooperation will advance energy transition in the wider region through renewable energy generation and integration (solar, wind, hydropower, renewable hydrogen and geothermal), electrification of demand, energy efficiency measures, including methane mitigation, and through support for the digitalisation and smart management of energy infrastructure to improve system resilience and efficiency.

32. Azerbaijan has vast renewable energy potential and is increasingly open to working with international financial institutions on grid infrastructure upgrades and generation capacity. Azerbaijan is also advancing energy efficiency policies and measures across key sectors of the economy. These factors can help to accelerate the decarbonisation of the power sector, improve energy security and create clean energy surpluses for cross-border trade and regional connectivity projects, thus contributing to the implementation of EU's Global Gateway strategy, the EU's Cross-Regional Connectivity Agenda, and the Trans-European Energy Networks framework in respective area. In this regard, the Parties will explore how regional energy connectivity projects complement the EU and Azerbaijan's climate and energy security objectives, strengthened through the Memorandum of Understanding on a Strategic Partnership in the Field of Energy (18 July 2022) and the EU-Azerbaijan High-Level Energy Dialogue. On 'soft' connectivity, the Parties will strengthen regional cooperation on regulatory and market issues through relevant initiatives.

33. The EU and Azerbaijan aim to cooperate towards meeting the objectives of the Paris Agreement and ensuring its full implementation, including via regular updates to nationally determined contributions (NDCs) aimed at sustained reductions in

greenhouse gas emissions, in light of national circumstances. Increased cooperation on climate action will help Azerbaijan to develop an economy that is more efficient, competitive, resilient and stable, in accordance with its NDCs and national adaptation plans. Mutually agreed projects backed by adequate concessional financing in line with the Paris Agreement, as well as the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance agreed by decision 1/CMA.5 at COP29, will be developed and implemented to advance Azerbaijan's national climate, environment and mitigation and adaptation plans and further mainstream climate and environment action into national policies, thereby supporting climate-resilient initiatives. Such initiatives include: strengthening sustainable water management, setting up integrated waste management systems, improving energy efficiency in urban systems and undertaking other mutually agreed climate-related projects. Scientific output and support via Horizon Europe-funded projects will strengthen the implementation of Azerbaijan's national climate and mitigation and adaptation plans and will help to advance cooperation on renewable energy generation and integration. The Parties will also cooperate on the development of carbon pricing and emission trading mechanisms as cost-effective domestic climate policy instruments that may also promote innovation and generate revenues which can fund the transition towards clean technologies and resilience to climate-to-climate change risks.

34. Strengthening water management, water security and resilience to climate change will be a shared priority. The EU and Azerbaijan will support collaboration on mainstreaming integrated water resource management principles at national, river basin and local levels through: (i) legal, institutional and operational reforms; (ii) strategic environmental assessments; (iii) strengthened licensing and permitting systems; (iv) economic instruments; and (v) expanded hydrological and water-quality monitoring capacities. Particular attention will be paid to applying sustainable adaptation practices, i.e. practices that deliver effective and consistent responses to climate change impacts in the short and long term. The Parties will furthermore support the development, adoption and implementation of River Basin Management Plans for all river basin districts, including the setting up of participatory governance structures.

The Parties will cooperate in advancing the operationalisation of the Baku dialogue on water for climate action, Azerbaijan's COP29 initiative launched under the COP29 Presidency declaration on water for climate action.

35. The Parties will continue their cooperation in the area of civil protection and disaster risk management, also as part of the regional civil protection programme in the Eastern Partnership countries (PPRD East 4).

3. Connectivity, Smart Infrastructure and Reconstruction

36. The EU and Azerbaijan will enhance partnership on connectivity, building upon Azerbaijan's role as a key hub. The established relevant High-Level Dialogues, as well as High-Level Working Group on Economic Cooperation to strengthen EU-Azerbaijan economic cooperation and investments under the Global Gateway initiative will be key to moving the joint agenda forward. Actions will include: developing transport infrastructure, advancing digital solutions in transport, and promoting cooperation across all transport modes, for the further development of the extended TEN-T network, where appropriate, in line with the EU-Azerbaijan connectivity agenda.

Building on these actions, the Parties concur on the need to explore updates to the extended TEN-T network to better reflect new developments and initiatives aimed at enhancing connectivity in the region, including with respect to the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Under the EU-Azerbaijan Connectivity Partnership, the Parties will cooperate in supporting the development of projects related to transport, energy, clean energy interconnectors and digital economy, including AI and cyber security solutions. To this end, in the framework of relevant EU mechanisms, such as the EU's Global Gateway strategy, the Parties will facilitate the mobilisation of financial and technical resources through an appropriate combination of instruments, including concessional loans, grants, guarantees, equity participation, blended-finance structures and other investment de-risking mechanisms, with a view to enhancing project bankability and ensuring access to financing on competitive, transparent, and sustainable terms.

37. The Parties acknowledge the strategic role of the TCTC in linking Azerbaijan, the EU and regional partners. In line with European and international standards, including through, where relevant, possible engagement of other participants of the TCTC, the Parties will continue to cooperate on infrastructure development, advance the

digitalisation of transport systems and logistics processes and promote interoperability and collaboration across all modes of transport.

38. The Parties will seek to expand the TCTC transit and transport potential through the development of infrastructure and capabilities that strengthen multimodal interoperability, noting in particular the strategic importance of the railway link in the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, a joint priority project for Azerbaijan and the EU. Cooperation in this domain will also include making international financial institutions, investment banks and private sector stakeholders aware of related investment opportunities, facilitating structured dialogue with potential investors, and supporting the preparation and presentation of bankable projects in line with international standards.
39. The Parties will strengthen cooperation to modernise, digitalise and green Azerbaijan's transport sector, including through improving legal, regulatory, institutional control and enforcement frameworks, in line with relevant international standards. Particular attention will be paid to pursuing negotiations for an EU-Azerbaijan Common Aviation Area Agreement with a view to its conclusion based on the principles of mutual interest and shared benefit.
40. The Parties will build the capacities of the national transport authorities through capacity building and structured training programmes that include also green and digital skills. Opportunities for developing value-added logistics will be examined to ensure that Azerbaijan benefits from relevant transit flows. Partnerships between government, academia and the private sector will be fostered to accelerate clean transport innovation. Support will also be directed to the digitalisation and interoperability of Azerbaijan's transport network to enhance efficiency, safety and multimodal integration across road, rail, maritime, aviation and logistics platforms.
41. Urban development and post-conflict reconstruction will be advanced in the Garabagh and Eastern Zangezur Economic Regions, guided by sustainable, resilient and smart urban planning principles. Successful humanitarian demining is a prerequisite for safe reconstruction, resettlement, connectivity and agricultural renewal in these regions. Building on the EU's financial support, including the Team Europe Initiative on Mine Action, the Parties will cooperate to strengthen Azerbaijan's mine action capacity. This cooperation will include the establishment of an International Centre of Excellence and Training for Mine Action in Azerbaijan, which will serve as a national, regional

and international hub for training, capacity building, innovation and knowledge transfer in mine action, focusing on the latest techniques and technologies. Efforts to raise awareness of the humanitarian impact of landmines and explosive remnants of war will be increased.

4. Human Development, Mobility and Innovation

42. The Parties will promote people-to-people contacts, mobility, education, research and innovation, culture, youth engagement and inclusive socio-economic and human development.

43. The Parties will place particular focus on encouraging research collaboration in fundamental sciences, engineering, computer science and artificial intelligence through EU programmes including Horizon Europe. The Parties will encourage the participation of Azerbaijan in Horizon Europe and other relevant EU programmes, including scientific collaboration and exchanges among universities, research institutions, private companies, and other research and innovation stakeholders.

44. The Parties look forward to strengthening cooperation and further progress in the area of mobility, in a secure and well-managed environment and recognise the importance of people-to-people contacts, including through enhanced mobility.

The Parties will continue cooperation for the implementation of the EU-Azerbaijan Readmission Agreement and recognise the importance of reintegration.

A structured dialogue on visa facilitation will continue in the context of the implementation of the EU-Azerbaijan Visa Facilitation Agreement, with a view to strengthening cooperation, including in education, employment, culture, youth, and research. The Parties welcome the continued implementation of the EU-Azerbaijan Visa Facilitation Agreement with a view to further facilitating mutual travel.

45. The Parties will support people-to-people contacts and cooperation between higher education institutions and vocational education and training (VET) providers, to modernise curricula, enhance teaching and learning methodologies, including where appropriate through Erasmus+.

46. The Parties will build on previous cooperation in the field of VET to support the development of a national qualifications system. The Parties will also support cooperation between youth and sport organisations.

47. The Parties shall promote lifelong learning initiatives to support the continuous development of skills and competencies across the education continuum, while also fostering education for sustainable development through the integration of environmental and climate considerations at all levels of education, particularly in the context of the digital and green transitions.
48. The Parties will further enhance cooperation in cybersecurity and digital security to strengthen ICT-enabled infrastructure resilience and support secure digital transformation through capacity building and the exchange of expertise, including in the area of cybercrime.
49. The Parties will explore the establishment of targeted technical and financial assistance mechanisms to support the effective operationalisation of agreed ethical and legal frameworks on artificial intelligence, including through pilot projects and regulatory sandboxes in priority sectors, with a view to ensuring that regulatory cooperation translates into tangible socio-economic development outcomes in accordance with respective legislation and strategies, also taking into account existing best practices of the Parties.
50. The Parties will explore the possibility to foster a facilitative and risk-based regulatory environment that facilitates advanced technologies and capabilities, and that supports research, experimentation, and the development, testing and deployment of innovative technological solutions within the Republic of Azerbaijan.
51. The Parties will cooperate in supporting the development and deployment of cybersecurity solutions, digitalisation initiatives and other advanced technologies in the Republic of Azerbaijan.
52. The Parties, in line with their respective legislation and strategies, further intend to strengthen the enabling regulatory, institutional and infrastructure environment necessary for a secure, resilient and high-performance digital ecosystem, including robust data governance and digital frameworks and, where appropriate, taking into account best practices of both sides.

In this context, the Parties may explore possible avenues to support and facilitate a favourable environment for investment, access to advanced technological infrastructure and capital markets, and the promotion of foreign direct investment, including, where appropriate, through contacts with technology providers, financial

institutions and other relevant stakeholders, with a view to contributing to economic development and resilience over time.