



Warsaw, 27 September 2016

## **Freedom of Movement for the people of Artsakh**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We all know that freedom of movement is one of the fundamental human rights and freedoms. In today's era of globalisation, it is impossible to imagine a normal and dignified life, if the right to mobility is limited. In EU countries everything possible was and is being done to promote this right.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to draw your attention to the problems faced by our organization, and I am sure there are many others like us, that arise from some political considerations.

Consular representatives of some EU countries in Armenia often reject requests to obtain a visa from people with Armenian passports who work in Nagorno-Karabakh. People fulfill all obligations and submit all the documents required for a Schengen visa, but once they mention about their employment in Nagorno-Karabakh, the issuance of visa is rejected for "political considerations".

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is simply incomprehensible. However, some EU countries, which based on international humanitarian law receive annually almost one million refugees, which is undoubtedly commendable, and urge neighboring countries to demonstrate similar behavior, deny entry visas to people who legally, following all the rules submit relevant applications.

Thus, this year, together with our European partners we invited people from Nagorno-Karabakh to participate in various exhibitions and forums, as well as to meet with European business people, politicians and public figures. Almost all attempts failed, simply because consulates refused to issue visas.

For comparison: a country like the United States facilitates the issuance of visas to applicants with Armenian passports by granting it for up to 10 years.

We believe this situation is unacceptable. It could be described as supporting the Azerbaijani government's policy on isolation of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Taking this opportunity, I ask you to address this issue and improve the situation.

Thank you.