

REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

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ABSTRACT

of the dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

**EUROPEAN UNION IN THE FOREIGN POLICY OF
AZERBAIJAN: CURRENT SITUATION AND
PERSPECTIVES OF COOPERATION**

Speciality: 5901.01 – International relations

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Applicant: **Aygun Mehman Aliyeva**

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The work was performed at the department of “Diplomacy and Foreign Policy” of Baku Slavic University.

Scientific Supervisor: * Doctor of Historical sciences, professor
Anar Jamal Isgandarov

Official opponents: Doctor of Political sciences, professor
Hijran Kamran Husseinova

Doctor of Philosophy in Political
sciences, associate professor
Sanan Samandar Hasanov

Doctor of Philosophy in Political
sciences
Rashad Rahim Maharramov

Dissertation council FD 2.30 of Supreme Attestation Commission under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan operating at the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan

Chairman of the Dissertation
council:

Scientific secretary of the
Dissertation council:

Chairman of the scientific
seminar:

Academician

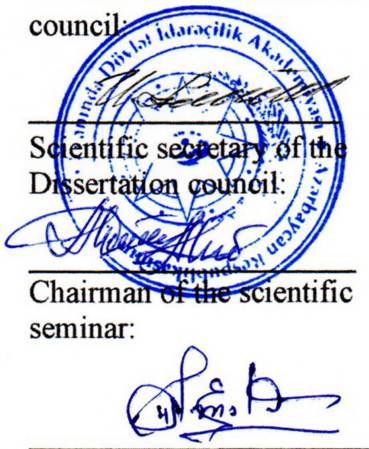
Urkhan Kazim Alekberov

Doctor of political sciences,
Professor

Sevda Aghamirza Aliyeva

Doctor of political sciences,
professor

Elchin Ildirim Ahmadov



GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DISSERTATION

Relevance of the topic and degree of development. Studying the foreign political course of the Republic of Azerbaijan, which is becoming one of the leading states of the modern international relations system, its conceptual foundations, the current situation and prospects of cooperation with the European Union (EU) as one of the main priorities determines the relevance of the topic. First of all, because the EU has gone a long way in building civil society, developing democracy, protection of people's rights and freedoms, and ensuring sustainable economic development. Today, this great experience gained by the EU forms the main directions of the policy implemented by the Republic of Azerbaijan. For the EU, the Republic of Azerbaijan is of great importance mainly due to its strategic position, importance as a transit country, especially in meeting Europe's energy supply. Complex investigation of these issues makes the topic even more relevant.

After the victory of Azerbaijan in the 44-day Patriotic War in 2020, the mediation of the EU between Azerbaijan and Armenia, mainly the organization of inter-party meetings, the increase of the interests of the EU in the region and the attempts to conduct an active policy determine the relevance of the topic.

On the whole, the lack of a comprehensive study of the period from 1992 to 2022, when cooperation with the EU was established in Azerbaijan's foreign policy, created a certain gap in the field of political science. This thesis can be considered an attempt to fill this gap.

Considering the contradictions in deepening cooperation between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the EU, its efforts to take a leading position in the European market, and the attraction of European companies to Azerbaijan makes the topic even more relevant. Today, in accordance with the multi-vector and balanced foreign policy course laid by national leader Heydar Aliyev in the foreign policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan, our state occupies its rightful place in the system of international relations.

Foreign policy course of Azerbaijan appears as a valuable experience for the field of political sciences, whose main purpose is to determine the tasks and development paths ahead by comprehensively examining the events and processes taking place, and to make scientific predictions with a certain basis. Based on this experience, the systematic study of the current state and prospects of Azerbaijan's cooperation with the EU and the identification of its main stages in the dissertation work is another aspect that makes the topic relevant.

The mentioned factors determine the relevance of the research of Azerbaijan's cooperation with the EU and make it necessary to investigate the topic as a dissertation work.

Considering the level of study of the topic, the works involved in the research can be grouped as follows:

1. Research works dedicated to the history of modern international relations, foreign policy of Azerbaijan and stages of its development;
2. Research works dedicated to the EU, its structure and main activities;
3. Research works dedicated to the cooperation between Azerbaijan and the EU.

An attempt was made to give an objective assessment to the works involved into the research and a comparative analysis was performed during their use.

The collection of articles entitled "The main directions of the foreign policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan (1991-2016)" can be cited as an example of the research works included in the first group. This collection includes research on the economic and humanitarian aspects of the foreign policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan, energy policy, independent and modern foreign policy, and diplomatic issues.¹

¹ Azərbaycan Respublikasının xarici siyasətinin əsas istiqamətləri (1991-2016) / red.: F. Məmmədov, C. Vəliyev, A. Məmmədov. – Bakı: "Poliart" MMC, – 2017. – 904 s.

The formation and development of the foreign policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan during the years of independence, its scientific and theoretical foundations and the practical results obtained are explained in detail in many works. In this regard, the works of Y.Mahmudov² and M.Gasimov³ are of great importance in terms of studying the conceptual issues of Azerbaijan's foreign policy.

The second group of works involved in the research includes works by M.A.Bakhishov⁴, R.A.Sadigov⁵, Sh.I.Zeynalova⁶, A.Okchay⁷, H.Samur⁸, N.K.Arbatova, P.A.Kalinichenko, K.I.Trubacheva⁹, M.J.Dedman¹⁰, A.M.El-Agraa¹¹, W.V.Gerven¹²,

² Mahmudov, Y.M. Azərbaycan tarixində Heydər Əliyev şəxsiyyəti / Y.Mahmudov. – Bakı: Təhsil, – 2002. – 328 s.

³ Qasimov, M.C. Azərbaycanın xarici siyasəti: konsepsiya məsələləri / M. Qasimov; elmi red.: Həsən Əlibəyli. – Bakı: Mütərcim, – 1997. – 124 s.

⁴ Baxışov, M.Ə. Avropa İttifaqı ilə Rusiya Federasiyası arasında münasibətlərin inkişafı // – Bakı: Bakı Universitetinin xəbərləri. Humanitar elmlər seriyası. – 2010. №4, – s.79-82.

⁵ Sadıqov, R.Ə. Avropa İttifaqının Şərqi Siyasətində Cənubi Qafqaz faktorı: / siyasi elmlər üzrə fəlsəfə doktoru dis. / – Bakı, 2011. – 153 s.

⁶ Zeynalova, Ş.İ. Avropa İttifaqı çərçivəsində inteqrasiya prosesləri: problemlər və onların həlli perspektivləri / Ş.İ.Zeynalova. – Bakı: Elm və Təhsil, – 2021. –221 s.

⁷ Akçay, Ö. Avropa komşuluk politikası // Ulusaldan Kürelele: Popülizm, Demokrasi, Güvenlik Konferansı, – İstanbul: – 10 Aralık – 11 Aralık, – 2020, – s.1-6.

⁸ Samur, H. Avropa Komşuluk politikası ve amaçları // – Türkiye: Elektronik Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi, – c. 8. – 2009. Sayı 27 (018-035), – s. 18-35

⁹ Европейский Союз и региональные конфликты / Отв. ред. – Н.К. Арбатова, А.М. Кокеев. – М.: ИИЭМО РАН, 2011. – 143 с.; Калининченко, П.А., Трубачева, К.И. Европейский Союз на постсоветском пространстве: право, интеграция, геополитика: монография / П.А. Калининченко, К.И. Трубачева. – М.: РочНОУ, 2012. – 208 с.

¹⁰ Dedman M.J. The Origins and Development of the European Union. A history of European integration 1945–95. – New York: Taylor & Francis e-Library, – 2001. – 158 p.;

¹¹ El-Agraa, A.M. The European Union. Economics and Policies / M.El-Agraa. – Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, – 2007. – 633 p.

¹² Gerven, W.V. The European Union. A Polity of States and Peoples / W.Gerven. – California: Stanford University Press, – 2005. – 414 p.

S.Mayer¹³, T.L.Moga, D. Alexeev¹⁴ and others. This mentioned authors devoted their works to the study of the EU, its foreign policy and expansion of regional policy, initiatives such as “European Neighbourhood Policy”, “Eastern Partnership” and put forward interesting and valuable ideas for the topic under study.

The third group of works used in the research process deals with the relations between Azerbaijan and the EU. As an example of these works, we can mention dissertation work of Hijran Husseinova¹⁵. In the research work, the character of the historical, scientific-theoretical and socio-political factors determining Azerbaijan’s joining the European integration processes, the role of international organizations in joining of Azerbaijan the European integration processes, Azerbaijan’s relations with European countries against the background of its cooperation with Turkey, Great Britain, France and Germany, the role of “Oil diplomacy” in joining of Azerbaijan the European integration processes has been studied. However, considering that the chronological framework of the work covers the years 1991-2001, this research allows us to overview only at the initial period of our Republic’s relations with the EU. S.A.Eyvazova’s work¹⁶ should also be specially mentioned. In this research, the priorities of the integration of the Republic of Azerbaijan into the EU, the international legal basis of cooperation between the EU and the Republic of Azerbaijan, the interaction of the European Neighborhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership with the EU

¹³ Mayer, S. "TACIS and EU's security of energy supply: the Commission as a strategic actor in external relations." *TranState Working Papers* 46, University of Bremen, Collaborative Research Center 597: Transformations of the State. – Breme: EU, – 2006. – 35 p.

¹⁴ Moga, T.L., Alexeev, D. Post-Soviet States between Russia and the EU: Reviving Geopolitical Competition? A Dual Perspective. *Connections // The Quarterly Journal*, – 2013. №1, Vol. 13. – p. 41-52

¹⁵ Eyvazova, S.Ə. Avropa İttifaqı və Azərbaycan Respublikası əməkdaşlığının hüquqi əsasları / S.Eyvazova. – Bakı: Azər nəşr, – 2018. – 288 s.

¹⁶ Eyvazova, S.Ə. Avropa İttifaqı və Azərbaycan Respublikası əməkdaşlığının hüquqi əsasları / S.Eyvazova. – Bakı: Azər nəşr, – 2018. – 288 s.

Founding Acts, the importance of the international legal basis for the legislative system of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the sphere of the economic and social security model of the EU, including energy, investment, customs tariff has been widely investigated. The thesis of Leyla Vagif gizi¹⁷ is also important in terms of the problem study. Besides the mentioned works, the articles of R.Bakhshaliyev,¹⁸ K.Adigezalov,¹⁹ V.Bayramov²⁰ and others, especially related to the development stages of the cooperation between the EU and Azerbaijan after the Patriotic War, can also be distinguished. The work, authored by K. Adıgozalov, firstly considers the dynamics of the development of relations between the EU and Azerbaijan from 2015 to 2020 and justifies why and how Azerbaijan is important from the EU perspective.²¹ The most interesting aspect of this work - after reviewing these issues, it is pointed out that the success achieved in the 44-day Patriotic War was a turning point in Azerbaijan's relations with the EU. The idea put forward by the author at the end of the article, "*The attitude of the EU to the realization of the Zangezur Corridor has an important test effect for Brussels*",²² as a matter of fact, is the main essence of the research. At least because it is extremely

¹⁷ Vaqif qızı, L. Azərbaycan Respublikası ilə Avropa İttifaqı arasında əməkdaşlıq (1991-2008-ci illər): / tarix üzrə fəlsəfə doktoru dis. / – Bakı, 2017. – 172 s.

¹⁸ Baxşəliyev R. İlham Əliyev diplomatiyasının təntənəsi. Azərbaycanın Avropa İttifaqı və Rusiya ilə münasibətlərinin yeni inkişaf mərhələsinə qədəm qoyması yüksələn beynəlxalq nüfuzun göstəricisidir // Azərbaycan. – 2021, 24 iyul. – s. 1; 3

¹⁹ Adıgözəlov, K. Avropa İttifaqı – Azərbaycan münasibətləri: Prezident İlham Əliyevin təşəbbüsləri yeni perspektivlər açır // Xalq qəzeti. – 2021, 9 iyun. – s. 3-4.; Adıgözəlov, K. Avropa İttifaqının "Şərq Tərəfdaşlığı"na yeni yanaşması: İlham Əliyev diplomatiyasının strateji uğuru // Xalq qəzeti. – 2021, 20 avqust. – s. 3.

²⁰ Bayramov, V. Avropa İttifaqı ilə əməkdaşlıq Azərbaycanın xarici siyasətinin əsas prioritetlərindəndir // Xalq qəzeti. – 2020, 27 sentyabr. – s. 1.; Bayramov, V. Azərbaycanın təşəbbüsləri beynəlxalq aləmdə dəstəklənir // Xalq qəzeti. – 2021, 4 iyun. – s. 3.

²¹ Adıgözəlov, K. Avropa İttifaqı – Azərbaycan münasibətləri: Prezident İlham Əliyevin təşəbbüsləri yeni perspektivlər açır // Xalq qəzeti. – 2021, 9 iyun. – s. 3-4.

²² Adıgözəlov, K. Avropa İttifaqının "Şərq Tərəfdaşlığı"na yeni yanaşması: İlham Əliyev diplomatiyasının strateji uğuru // Xalq qəzeti. – 2021, 20 avqust. – s. 3.

important in terms of ensuring energy security of Europe against the backdrop of the Ukrainian war starting in 2022. The articles authored by V.Bayramov are mainly descriptive and reporting articles. In other words, the analysis of the development dynamics of Azerbaijan's relations with the EU is presented very weakly, and mainly the inter-party contradictions are ignored.

The works of E.Suleymanov,²³ S.Hamidov,²⁴ L.Akhundov,²⁵ F.Huseynov,²⁶ O.Shabelnikova²⁷ should be distinguished from the third group. For instance, in the work authored by E.Suleymanov²⁸, the dynamics of the formation and development of relations between the EU and Azerbaijan, priority areas of cooperation are studied in the chronological framework from the 90s of the 20th century to 2011. The conclusion reached in this work is that the position of the EU regarding the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has always been cautious and amorphous. Like other international organizations, the EU was satisfied with only adopting official documents, did not apply any sanctions against the occupying Armenia, and was not an active participant in the process of resolving this conflict until 2011.²⁹

²³ Süleymanov, E.S. Avropa İttifaqı və Azərbaycan : strateji tərəfdaşlığa doğru / E.S.Süleymanov. – Bakı: Cbs polygraphic production mətbəəsi, – 2011. – 112 s.

²⁴ Həmidov, S.S. Avropa İttifaqında siyasi inteqrasiya problemi : / siyasi elmlər üzrə fəlsəfə doktoru dis./ – Bakı, 2007. – 205 s.

²⁵ Ахундова, Л.Р. Азербайджан и европейские структуры: проблемы интеграции. : / Диссертация на соискание ученой степени кандидата политических наук. / – Москва, 2000. – 205 с.

²⁶ Гусейнов, Ф.Ш. Геополитические аспекты сотрудничества Европейского Союза и Азербайджанской Республики Азербайджан и европейские структуры: проблемы интеграции: : / Диссертация на соискание ученой степени кандидата политических наук. / – Баку, 2011. – 163 с.

²⁷ Шабельникова, О.В. Политика Европейского союза в отношении Азербайджанской Республики: 1991-2014 гг.: /Автореферат диссертации на соискание ученой степени кандидата исторических наук. / – Москва, 2014. – 27 с.

²⁸ Süleymanov, E.S. Avropa İttifaqı və Azərbaycan : strateji tərəfdaşlığa doğru / E.S.Süleymanov. – Bakı: Cbs polygraphic production mətbəəsi, – 2011. – 112 s.

²⁹ Süleymanov, E.S. Avropa İttifaqı və Azərbaycan : strateji tərəfdaşlığa doğru / E.S.Süleymanov. – Bakı: Cbs polygraphic production mətbəəsi, – 2011. – s. 55

Indeed, there has been no significant change in this regard since 2011. Only Azerbaijan's victory in the Second Karabakh War in 2020 and the Russia's aggression against Ukraine in 2022 became a more serious turning point in Azerbaijan's relations with the EU. The work of S.Hamidov³⁰ is also important in terms of the study of the problem. In this work, the political integration problems of the EU, the idea of "United Europe", the foreign political course of this organization in the field of security and defense, the bilateral relations between the EU and the Republic of Azerbaijan have been extensively analyzed. In another valuable research work³¹ authored by O.Shabelnikova, the relations of the EU with Azerbaijan were examined within the framework of 1991-2014. In chapter I of the research, the formation and development of relations between the EU and the Republic of Azerbaijan, in chapter II the mutual cooperation between the EU and the Republic of Azerbaijan within the framework of the the ENP and the EP programs, and in chapter III, security issues³² in the mutual relations between the EU and the Republic of Azerbaijan were put as a problem and tried to be solved. The work authored by F.Huseynov³³ is also important in terms of studying the geopolitical aspects of the problem we are investigating. However, this work also covers the period up to 2011, the period of the problem we are studying. Although L. Akhundova's work³⁴ is also important in

³⁰ Həmidov, S.S. Avropa İttifaqında siyasi inteqrasiya problemi : / siyasi elmlər üzrə fəlsəfə doktoru dis. / – Bakı, 2007. – 205 s.

³¹ Шабельникова, О.В. Политика Европейского союза в отношении Азербайджанской Республики: 1991-2014 гг.: /Автореферат диссертации на соискание ученой степени кандидата исторических наук. / – Москва, 2014. – 27с.

³² Гусейнов, Ф.Ш. Геополитические аспекты сотрудничества Европейского Союза и Азербайджанской Республики Азербайджан и европейские структуры: проблемы интеграции: / Диссертация на соискание ученой степени кандидата политических наук. / – Баку, 2011. – 163 с.

³³ Гусейнов, Ф.Ш. Геополитические аспекты сотрудничества Европейского Союза и Азербайджанской Республики Азербайджан и европейские структуры: проблемы интеграции: / Диссертация на соискание ученой степени кандидата политических наук. / – Баку, 2011. – 163 с.

³⁴ Ахундова, Л.Р. Азербайджан и европейские структуры: проблемы интеграции. : /Диссертация на соискание ученой степени кандидата политических наук. / – Москва, 2000. – 205 с.

terms of investigating the problem we are studying, this work also examines Azerbaijan's relations with the international structures of Europe, including the EU, until 2000.

The source base of the work consists of legal acts, speeches of the heads of state and governments, published archival materials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, EU and other official documents. The great leader Heydar Aliyev's services in establishing and developing Azerbaijan's relations with the EU, and in creating the legal basis of this cooperation, are unparalleled. From this viewpoint, the 46-volume collection "Our independence is eternal",³⁵ which includes his views, statements, interviews, opinions uttered in meetings with European officials on Azerbaijan's cooperation with the EU, constitutes an important source base of the research. It can be considered one of the most important sources the 116-volume collection entitled "Our development is our goal",³⁶ which includes the speeches, statements, and interviews of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, who is a worthy follower of the foreign political course of the national leader Heydar Aliyev.

Different collections of documents are also important from the viewpoint of studying the problem. The collections of documents "Foreign policy of Azerbaijan"³⁷ and "Armenia's aggression against Azerbaijan"³⁸ can be cited as examples. In particular, the statements made by the EU from 1992 to 2002 regarding the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, which are reflected in the collection of documents entitled "Armenia's Aggression against Azerbaijan" play an important role in studying the problem.

³⁵ Əliyev, H.Ə. Müstəqilliyimiz əbədidir: [46 cilddə] / H.Əliyev. – Bakı: Azərneşr, – 1997-2013.

³⁶ Əliyev, İ.H. İnkişaf - məqsədimizdir: [116 cilddə] / İ.Əliyev – Bakı: Azərneşr, – 2008-2022.

³⁷ Azərbaycanın xarici siyasəti: Sənədlər məcmuəsi. 2005. İkinci hissə / Azərbaycan Respublikasının Xarici İşlər Nazirliyi. – Bakı: GARİSMA MMC, – 2009. – 688 s.

³⁸ Əhmədov, E.İ. Ermənistanın Azərbaycana təcavüzü: Sənədlər və materiallar. I kitab. – Bakı: Azərbaycan Respublikasının Prezidenti yanında Elmin İnkişafı Fondu, – 2015. – 324 s.

Annual reports prepared on individual EU programs are also included in the source database of the problem. For instance, the 1993 and annual reports of the TACIS program³⁹ until 1995, or the final report on the evaluation of the TRACECA program for the years 1998-2002⁴⁰, can be cited as examples.

The documents and final acts adopted by various international structures of the world, including Europe, have been referred as well. For instance, the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, the OSCE Helsinki Document of 1992, the Paris Charter of 1990 and the Istanbul Charter of 1992 can be stated as well⁴¹.

As a whole, the numerous sources involved in the research were widely used to shed more objective light on the problem of the development of Azerbaijan-EU cooperation.

The object and subject of the research. The study of the cooperation of the Republic of Azerbaijan with the EU is the main research object of the dissertation. The subject of the research is the study of the current situation and perspectives of cooperation between the parties.

The goals and objectives of the research. The main goal of the dissertation work is to determine the internal and external factors that affect the establishment of Azerbaijan's cooperation with the EU and the development dynamics of bilateral relations during the period under study. Then, by summarizing the results obtained in this direction, it is aimed to form a complete picture of the current situation and perspectives of cooperation with the EU

³⁹ European Commission: The Tacis Programme Annual Report 1995. Com (96) 345 final. – Brussel: EC, – 1996. – 64 p.; Report from the commission Tacis. 1993 annual report. Brussel 23.03.1995. COM (95) 57 final. – Brussel: EU, – 1995. – 71 p.

⁴⁰ Evaluation of TRACECA Programme (1998-2002). Request for Services No 2002/47681. final report. July 2003. A project implemented by Jacobs Consultancy, – 2003. – 195 p.

⁴¹ Charter of the United Nations and statute of the international court of justice. – San Francisco: UN, – 1945. – 54 p.; Conference on security and co-operation in Europe Final act. – Helsinki: OSCE, – 1975. – 62 p.; CSCE Helsinki document 1992: The challenges of change. – Helsinki, – 1992. – 90 p.; Charter for European Security. – Istanbul: OSCE, – 1999. – 259 p.; Charter of Paris for a New Europe. – Paris: OSCE, – 1990. – 29 p.

in foreign policy of Azerbaijan. The tasks set to achieve this goal are as follows:

- To examine the conceptual bases and priorities of the European vector in the foreign policy of Azerbaijan, and for this purpose, first of all, to clarify the conceptual bases for the formation of the foreign policy of Azerbaijan;

- To determine the necessity and importance of relations with the EU, which is considered one of the main power centers in the world, in Azerbaijan's foreign policy;

- To clarify the importance of establishing cooperation with the EU as one of the priorities of Azerbaijan's foreign policy;

- To consider new forms of cooperation in EU relations with post-Soviet countries;

- To review Azerbaijan's participation in important EU programs and assess the results achieved to date in these institutional mechanisms;

- To clarify the main directions of Azerbaijan's cooperation with the EU within the framework of the New Neighborhood and Eastern Partnership policies and the existing contradictions between the parties;

- To analyze the development trends of Azerbaijan-EU relations and mutual interests between the parties;

- To consider the different and contradictory aspects that exist in the context of Azerbaijan's cooperation with the EU;

- To identify the priority directions of Azerbaijan-EU relations, which have been reshaped after the historic victory;

- To clarify the problem and prospects of deepening Azerbaijan-EU cooperation.

Research methods. The methods used in the dissertation work are based on the principles of historicity, scientific objectivity, and reliability. In particular, the principle of historicity gives an opportunity to follow the stages of formation of the EU's political course in relations with the Republic of Azerbaijan. This principle is also important for a better understanding of the current situation and perspectives of cooperation with the EU in foreign policy of Azerbaijan. Because the principle of historicity creates conditions

for determining the development characteristics of bilateral relations, making appropriate conclusions and generalizations. The principle of objectivity, which is the basis of the research, taking into account the characteristics of factors in political, economic, energy and other directions, necessitates their analysis. The principle of scientific reliability applied in the research work ensures the problem to be investigated based on primary sources, extensive facts and fundamental scientific information and to obtain more reliable results.

The main provisions of the defence. These provisions include:

- The development of relations with the EU is one of the most important priorities of the foreign policy of the independent Republic of Azerbaijan;

- The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement signed by the Republic of Azerbaijan and the EU does not involve the organization dictating its standards to Azerbaijan, but simply imposes certain obligations on the parties;

- The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement has served as a basis for Azerbaijan's cooperation with the EU in various fields within the framework of various programs and has laid the foundation for the future development of bilateral relations;

- The cooperation of the Republic of Azerbaijan within the framework of the EU's TACIS program and its multilateral network projects - TRACECA and INOGATE - has allowed us to increase the economic potential of our state, develop trade and transport relations with European countries, and further increase foreign investment attracted to our country;

- Projects such as TEMPUS and Erasmus Mundus, in which the Republic of Azerbaijan participates, have been of great importance in integration into the European educational space;

- Bilateral relations are based primarily on mutual interests, in this regard, the signing of a strategic partnership agreement between the parties is more beneficial for both parties than membership;

– Against the background of new geopolitical realities emerging in the region after the Second Karabakh War, Azerbaijan-EU relations began to take on new content and importance;

– The full restoration of our republic's sovereignty throughout the country following the local anti-terrorist operations carried out by Azerbaijan in September 2023 played an important role in moving Azerbaijan-EU cooperation to a new, more progressive level;

– The Republic of Azerbaijan is one of the main providers of energy security for Europe.

Scientific novelty of the research. All scientific issues raised in the dissertation were investigated based on information from primary sources. In the context of the new trends formed in the region, especially as a result of the Second Karabakh War and the anti-terror operations carried out by our republic on September 19-20, 2023, Azerbaijan-EU relations have become the object of research in the field of political science for the first time, and the following scientific results were obtained in the course of the research:

– The stage of cooperation between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the EU from 1992 to the present day has been comprehensively studied for the first time;

– The conceptual bases and priorities of the European vector in foreign policy of Azerbaijan were elaborated in a comprehensive chronological framework;

– Azerbaijan's participation in important EU programs and mutual interests in relations have been studied comprehensively for the first time within the studied chronological framework;

– The development dynamics of the cooperation of the Republic of Azerbaijan with the EU before and after the Second Karabakh War were comparatively analyzed, and the results obtained were summarized and useful recommendations were put forward;

– For the first time in the field of political science, the contradictions and prospects in Azerbaijan-EU relations have been studied in detail against the backdrop of new geopolitical realities formed in the region as a result of the anti-terror operations conducted by our state in 2023, and certain conclusions have been reached;

– As a result of our Republic’s prompt diplomacy accompanied by multi-vector strategic maneuvers, the acquisition of new content in its relations with the countries of China and the Middle East, in addition to the South Caucasus and Central Asia, has been accompanied by the further strengthening of Azerbaijan’s position in the geopolitical sphere. In this context, it has been concluded that it no longer plays the role of just an energy provider for the EU, but has also become an important partner in global security issues;

– It was highlighted that the Republic of Azerbaijan, by pursuing a balanced policy between East and West, gave a new and completely different strategic content to the middle power factor in world politics;

– Mutual interests, development trends, existing contradictions, priority directions and prospects of relations in Azerbaijan’s cooperation with the EU were examined for the first time in a chronological framework, studied as a separate problem;

– – The scientific novelty of the research is also the fact that the dissertation reflects new goals such as discussing constructive work in Karabakh today, instead of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, implementing the Zangezur corridor plan, and Azerbaijan taking on a special mission by uniting the South Caucasus region.

Theoretical and practical significance of the research. The factual materials used in the dissertation and the obtained results can be used in the humanities and social sciences faculties of the universities in conducting specialty courses on “The European Union in the foreign policy of Azerbaijan: the current state and perspectives of cooperation”, preparing educational supplies, writing generalized works, holding scientific conferences and seminars.

Approbation and application. The research work was discussed at the meeting of the department “Diplomacy and Foreign Policy” of Baku Slavic University on June 23, 2022, and was recommended to be allowed to defense. The provisions covering the main content of the dissertation work were reflected in the author’s scientific articles, as well as in her speeches at Baku Slavic University, other scientific centers and educational institutions of the country, as well as at scientific conferences organized outside the country.

The name of the organization where the dissertation work was performed. The dissertation work was performed at the department of “Diplomacy and Foreign Policy” of Baku Slavic University.

The total volume of the dissertation in characters, indicating the volume of the structural sections of the dissertation separately. The total volume of the dissertation, including the introduction, 3 chapters, 9 subchapters and the conclusion, consists of 264356 characters. Including the introduction - 25061, chapter I - 59321, chapter II - 83784, chapter III - 85371, conclusion - 9174 characters.

THE MAIN CONTENT OF THE DISSERTATION

The relevance of the topic is grounded in the **Introduction**. The chronological framework of the study, the level of studying and the source base are determined, the goals and tasks of the study are defined, the scientific innovation is grounded, the methodological bases, theoretical and practical importance are noted, also information is given about the approbation and structure of the dissertation.

Chapter I entitled “**The European vector of foreign policy of Azerbaijan: conceptual bases**” consists of three sub-chapters. In the first sub-chapter entitled “**The formation and conceptual bases of foreign policy of Azerbaijan**”, the influence of the complex political situation on the formation of conceptual bases in the first years of independence in the Republic of Azerbaijan,

which regained its independence in 1991, is clarified. It turns out that in the first years of our independence, the Azerbaijani people were accused of Islamic fundamentalism and fanaticism in the West, and in 1992-1993, they were accused of extreme nationalism and “blockade” of Armenia. The Western press, in turn, carried out strong anti-Azerbaijani propaganda. However, with the National Leader Heydar Aliyev starting to lead Azerbaijan again in 1993, the Republic of Azerbaijan was able to rise from being blocked in the world information space to the level of a regional initiative and leader.

It is noted in this sub-chapter that the National Leader defined his political line while he was still the Speaker of the Milli Majlis and even then he defined the conceptual bases of Azerbaijan’s foreign policy: *“Foreign policy of Azerbaijan is free and independent. Our country is open to all countries of the world. We are ready to establish relations with any state that recognizes the independence of Azerbaijan, does not harm its interests, and has a positive attitude towards our country, and we are establishing such relations. Azerbaijan is on the way to establish bilateral, mutually beneficial relations with all countries, and it will continue this way. “In its foreign policy, Azerbaijan pays great attention to the expansion of relations with neighboring states”*.⁴² As a whole, the system of relations with countries in the region where our country is located is very complex and contradictory. This brings Azerbaijan’s balanced regional policy in foreign relations to the fore as a special priority. Because a balanced regional policy is a factor that can undoubtedly play the role of the most important guarantor for the country’s security and independent future.

In the second sub-chapter, entitled **“Development of European Integration Processes and the Importance of Cooperation with the European Union in Azerbaijan’s Foreign Policy”**, first comments on the integration processes in Europe and

⁴² Əliyev, H.Ə. Müstəqilliyimiz əbədidir: [46 cilddə] / H.Əliyev. – Bakı: Azərneşr, – c. 2. – 1997. – s. 47.

the view of integration from the prism of “Europeanism” or “Atlanticism” in Western socio-political thought are explained. “Europeanism” as seen from the name suggests saw Western Europe at the forefront of political and economic integration processes, the theory of “Atlanticism” advocated the idea of a military-political unity of the states of the Atlantic Ocean basin “against the communist East”. Functionalist and neo-functionalist, federalist and transnational (pluralist) schools reflecting the ways of development of integration are also considered in this sub-chapter. Then, the relations between the European Union, which is currently an economic and political partnership between 27 European countries, and the Republic of Azerbaijan, are briefly explained. It is known that the history of the establishment of this organization dates back to the 1950s. Robert Schuman, who was the Minister of Foreign Affairs of France in 1948-1952, proposed the unification of coal and steel production, and as a result, the Treaty of Paris was signed on March 19, 1951, with the participation of 6 states - France, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Italy. This treaty established the European Coal and Steel Community.⁴³ The European Unity began to be known as the European Union with the Maastricht Treaty, signed on 7 February 1992 and entering into force on 1 November 1993. The 15 independent republics that emerged after the collapse of the USSR also sought to establish direct relations with the European Union. Almost all of the post-Soviet countries were recognized by the Declaration of the Union and its member states “On the Status of Russia and Other Former Soviet Republics” of 23 December 1991.⁴⁴ Establishing cooperation with an organization with such a system was extremely important for the Republic of Azerbaijan, which had just regained its

⁴³ Dedman, M.J. The Origins and Development of the European Union. A history of European integration 1945–95. – New York: Taylor & Francis e-Library, – 2001. – p.57

⁴⁴ 103. Заявление Сообщества и государств-членов от 23 декабря 1991 г. о “двенадцати” о будущем статусе России и других бывших советских республик // Bull EC. – 1991. №12. – Point 1.4.10

independence in 1991. The Azerbaijani leadership at that time understood this well and sought to establish cooperation with the EU as one of the main priorities in the state's foreign policy.

The information provided in the third sub-chapter of **Chapter I** entitled “**New forms of cooperation in the relations of the European Union with post-Soviet countries**”, elucidates that the initial form of cooperation of the EU with post-Soviet countries was mainly based on partnership and cooperation agreements. However, the form of cooperation with the post-Soviet countries in the form of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement developed in a slightly different way only in relation to the Baltic countries. Even the Baltic countries were admitted to both the EU and NATO in the same year. However, the situation was completely different in relation to the South Caucasus.⁴⁵ This sub-chapter also lists the various financial and thematic programs of the European Union Neighborhood Policy, TACIS, MEDA⁴⁶, for the CIS countries, CARDS⁴⁷ and EIDHR⁴⁸ for the Western Balkan countries, which were implemented for the years 2000-2006, and emphasizes that they were implemented mainly for the financial support of the neighborhood policy. The TACIS program is particularly distinguished. Because this program is a special program implemented by the EU to help accelerate economic reforms in the CIS countries. This program was not limited to any support to be provided to the CIS countries on the path of

⁴⁵ Eyvazova, S.Ə. Avropa Qonşuluq Siyasəti – Azərbaycan Respublikası ilə əməkdaşlığın hüquqi əsasları / S.Ə.Eyvazova. – Bakı: Azərneşr, – 2018. – s. 22; Akçay, Ö. Avrupa komşuluk politikası // Ulusaldan Küresele: Poptülizm, Demokrasi, Güvenlik Konferansı, – İstanbul: – 10 Aralık – 11 Aralık, – 2020, – s.1.

⁴⁶ The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (MEDA): [Electronic resource] / URL: <https://www.fipec-ar.eu/commissions/the-euro-mediterranean-partnership-meda>

⁴⁷ CARDS: [Electronic resource] / URL: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/enlargement-policy/glossary/cards_en

⁴⁸ European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) : [Electronic resource] / URL: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/about_the_european_commission/eu_budget/db_2021_programme_statement_european_instrument_for_democracy_and_human_rights_eidhr.pdf

reforms, but also included ensuring the security of energy supply to Europe.⁴⁹ Another point that attracts attention in this sub-chapter is the attitude of the Russian Federation towards the eastward expansion of the EU. Thus, the current events around Georgia and Ukraine are commented on and it is proven once again that the new wave of enlargement of the EU does not seem realistic until the Russian factor in the Caucasus is resolved.

Chapter II of the dissertation, entitled “**Dynamics and main features of Azerbaijan-European Union relations**”, also consists of three subchapters. The first subchapter of Chapter II, entitled “**Features of development of Azerbaijan-European Union relations after the restoration of independence**”, first of all, focuses on the relations of the Republic of Azerbaijan with the EU from 1991 to 1996, especially the statements made by the organization on the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict. As a result of the research conducted, it becomes clear that the Republic of Azerbaijan, whose main goal in the first years of the restoration of independence was to further strengthen its positions in the international arena, by establishing cooperation with the EU, not only achieved this goal, but also created a fertile ground for the more rapid development of our country in the future, both in the political, economic and social spheres. In particular, as a result of the wise policy of the great leader, the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement signed between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the EU in Luxembourg on April 22, 1996, opened broad horizons for our state to expand and deepen comprehensive cooperation, strengthen integration principles, international peace and security, protect human rights, and achieve progress and fruitful cooperation throughout the

⁴⁹ Mayer, S. "TACIS and EU's security of energy supply: the Commission as a strategic actor in external relations," TranState Working Papers 46, University of Bremen, Collaborative Research Center 597: Transformations of the State. – Breme: EU, – 2006. – 35 p.

European continent.⁵⁰ It appears that it was the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement that shaped the mutual relations between the EU and the Republic of Azerbaijan and determined the main contours of the relations between the parties in the initial period. On the basis of this Agreement, initial cooperation contacts were established between Azerbaijan and the EU in various fields within the framework of various programs, and this agreement played a basic role in the development of the next stages of the relations between the parties.

The second sub-chapter of Chapter II, entitled **“Institutional mechanisms of Azerbaijan-European Union partnership”** is dedicated to the study of the participation of the Republic of Azerbaijan in important programs of the EU. In particular, the cooperation of our Republic within the framework of the European Union’s TACIS program⁵¹ and its most important multilateral network projects TRACECA⁵², TEMPUS⁵³, and INOGATE⁵⁴ has been explained in detail. It is clear that the TRACECA program has played an exceptional role in increasing the economic potential of our state, creating favorable conditions for transit transportation, and developing trade, economic and transport relations. Along with TRACECA, the implementation of projects within the INOGATE program has opened new perspectives for our country and has had a significant impact on attracting investments from international financial institutions and private investment funds to Azerbaijan

⁵⁰ Bakı-Brüssel (Azərbaycan-Avropa İttifaqı münasibətləri). – Bakı: Heydər Əliyev İrsini Araşdırma Mərkəzi, – 2011. – s.29-30

⁵¹ The European Commission’s Tacis Programme 1991 – 2006: [Electronic resource] / URL: <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/2/1/34459.pdf>

⁵² Hüseynova, H.K. Azərbaycan Avropa inteqrasiya prosesləri sistemində: / siyasi elmlər doktoru dis. / – Bakı, 2001. – s. 154.

⁵³ Hüseynova, H.K. Azərbaycan Avropa inteqrasiya prosesləri sistemində: / siyasi elmlər doktoru dis. / – Bakı, 2001. – s. 154.

⁵⁴ INOGATE & Azerbaijan: [Electronic resource] / URL: <http://www.inogate.org/countries/2?lang=en>

in the transportation of hydrocarbon resources. On the other hand, the importance of projects such as TEMPUS and Erasmus Mundus, in which the Republic of Azerbaijan participates within the framework of cooperation with the EU, for integration into the European educational space was studied during the research.

The third sub-chapter of Chapter II is called **“Mutual interests in Azerbaijan’s cooperation with the EU”**. In this sub-chapter, special attention is paid primarily to the establishment of relations between the parties in Brussels in accordance with the “New Neighborhood Policy”⁵⁵ and the “Eastern Partnership” program⁵⁶, and to the establishment of bilateral relations with Azerbaijan as the leading state of the South Caucasus. As is known, the neighborhood policy emerged as a result of the EU’s expansion to the East. As a result of the enlargement, the borders of the EU in the eastern and southern directions were renewed, and the concepts of “Neighboring countries” and “external borders of the EU” acquired new shades of content in the geopolitical context. Unlike the “old neighbors”, the “new neighbors” of the EU do not have direct borders with the union countries and were deprived of the opportunity to become its members. Besides, the “new neighbors” are very different as states and pursue different interests. This means that the EU could not build its policy in relation to countries that are directly adjacent to its borders (for example, Poland or Romania) in the same content as in relation to Georgia or Azerbaijan, which are geographically distant from it. The serious geopolitical-military processes that took place in September-November 2020 (44 days) became a complete turning point in these relations. As a result of the study of mutual interests in

⁵⁵ Sadıqov, R.Ə. Avropa İttifaqının Şərq siyasətində yeni meyarlar – “Avropa Qonşuluq Siyasəti” və “Şərq tərəfdaşlığı” // Tarix və onun problemləri, – 2009. №4, – s. 263.

⁵⁶ Sadıqov, R.Ə. Avropa İttifaqının Şərq siyasətində yeni meyarlar – “Avropa Qonşuluq Siyasəti” və “Şərq tərəfdaşlığı” // Tarix və onun problemləri, – 2009. №4, – s. 263.

Azerbaijan's cooperation with the EU, it becomes clear that the far-sighted policy pursued by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Mr. Ilham Aliyev, allows for the maximum consideration of the interests of our country in relations with the EU, one of the largest political and economic power centers in the world. This, in turn, leaves no doubt that the relations between the parties, which are continued against the background of mutual interests, will continue to develop in the future on an upward line. The study also shows that the implementation of the Zangezur corridor will be one of the most serious tests for Brussels on the way of bilateral cooperation developing in a positive direction.⁵⁷

The third chapter of the dissertation, entitled **“Azerbaijan-European Union relations in the context of modern international realities”**, also consists of three subchapters. The first subchapter of Chapter III is called **“The problem of integration and contradictions in Azerbaijan-European Union cooperation”**. Thus, the Republic of Azerbaijan has repeatedly stated that full integration based on national interests in its relations with the EU is not possible, but that it is always ready to develop relations on a bilateral basis. One of the main reasons for this approach was the difference in values between the parties and the use of this difference as a means of normative pressure by the EU. The research analyzes the reasons for the non-acceptance of the EU's value-based policy by the Republic of Azerbaijan and the impact of these factors on the dynamics of the development of mutual relations. The main point is the emerging discrepancy between the principles of normative values of the EU and the foreign policy course of Azerbaijan based on national interests. Another factor that undermined our mutual relations was the groundless resolutions adopted by the European Parliament against our state in various years. The European Parliament, which once opposed one of the main projects ensuring Europe's energy security - the Southern

⁵⁷ Abasov, C. Prezidentin uğurlu Fransa səfəri: Azərbaycan-Avropa İttifaqı əlaqələri inkişaf edir // 525-ci qəzet. – 2018, 24 iyul. – s.4.

Gas Corridor, did not hesitate to adopt biased resolutions with clauses that unreasonably targeted Azerbaijan, taking an anti-Azerbaijani stance during and after the 44-day Patriotic War. On the other hand, the anti-Azerbaijani stance of some leading EU states, especially France, and the activities of the EU monitoring mission sent to the border with Armenia are among the factors that undermine our relations.

The second subchapter of **Chapter III** is entitled **“Azerbaijan-European Union relations on the eve of and after the Second Karabakh War”**. This subchapter analyzes the European Union’s approach to the events taking place in the region on the eve of and during the 44-day Patriotic War, and in particular, draws attention to the formation of a new stage in the EU’s relations with Azerbaijan after the historic victory. Thus, the full restoration of our republic’s sovereignty over the territory of the country after the local anti-terror operations carried out by Azerbaijan in 2023 and the continuation of the peace treaty negotiations with Armenia within the framework of the conditions presented by Azerbaijan, which will be signed in the direction of normalizing Azerbaijani-Armenian relations, forced the EU to reconsider its South Caucasus policy. Because the distancing of Russia, whose position in the region was weakened after its intervention in Ukraine, from this process fully met the interests of the EU, and taking advantage of this opportunity, the EU did not want to remain outside the new geopolitical plane that was forming in the region. On the other hand, the sanctions imposed by the EU against Russia as a result of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, and the tension in European-US relations after the Trump Administration came to power in the United States, made the states of this organization consider the South Caucasus, especially the Republic of Azerbaijan, which can play the role of an alternative energy source, an extremely important and reliable partner for the EU from the perspective of energy supply and security. The growing influence of Azerbaijan, led by President Ilham Aliyev, not only in the region but also throughout the world, especially the multi-vector foreign policy activities carried out by the head of

state in 2024-2025, are characterized as a period of active diplomacy for our state. During this period, Azerbaijan-EU relations have also entered a new stage.

The last subchapter of Chapter III of the dissertation is called **“Development prospects of Azerbaijan-European Union cooperation”**. When considering the prospects of Azerbaijan-EU relations, it can be concluded that the relations between the EU and the Republic of Azerbaijan have begun to become increasingly intensive. Especially after the resolution of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, positive changes are clearly noticeable in the attitude of this international organization towards the Republic of Azerbaijan. New perspectives for the development of relations with the EU are being defined. These perspectives include the new geopolitical situation in the South Caucasus, the post-war period that began after the 44-day Patriotic War, the implementation of restoration and reconstruction works in our liberated territories, and the implementation of regional transport projects. On the other hand, if we take into account the Ukrainian case, which is of great concern to the international community, including the EU, today, it seems more realistic to sign a new comprehensive agreement on strategic partnership between Azerbaijan and the EU, which will be beneficial to both parties, instead of the associative membership format. Because today, energy security is a very important factor for Europe. One of the main guarantors of this factor is, of course, the Republic of Azerbaijan.

In the **“Conclusion”** section of the dissertation, the main scientific and theoretical results obtained during the research are systematized and summarized. It is noted that, first of all, Azerbaijan, as a young independent state, has politically significant experience as a country conducting a foreign policy course guided by national interests in relations with the EU, and this experience is currently being studied by other states in the region. At the same time, Azerbaijan has managed to skillfully take advantage of the contradictions within the EU and use it for its own interests. Azerbaijan is also the first and only post-Soviet country to change the nature of the process by declaring that

integration into the EU would not be possible due to the incompatibility of values. Finally, another point is that Azerbaijan has a unique foreign policy experience of pursuing an anti-colonialist policy internationally towards the leading EU member states and achieving success in this context, but without this foreign policy line having a negative impact on relations with the EU. Azerbaijan is, perhaps, the only country that has very skillfully benefited from the contradictions within the EU. So, Azerbaijan, taking advantage of the strategic differences in the future of integration in the so-called old-new Europe, such as the eastern and western parts of the EU, has created relations with the EU member states of Eastern Europe at such a level that it has been able to block the negative behavior and actions of the EU against Azerbaijan in this context. This blocking policy has been possible as a result of the close relations established between the Eastern European countries and our republic. Our state has been able to view the EU not as an institution, but as a union of diversities within which there are different views, and has been able to skillfully use these differences for the sake of the state interests of Azerbaijan. For Azerbaijan, the EU plays an important role in terms of relations with the participants of the modern world, and for the EU, Azerbaijan acts as the main guarantor of strong stability and security in the South Caucasus region.

The main content of the dissertation is reflected in the following published scientific works of the author:

1. Azərbaycan-Avropa İttifaqı münasibətlərini şərtləndirən amillər // Azərbaycanşünaslığın aktual problemləri, Ümummilli Lider H.Əliyevin anadan olmasının 90 illik yubileyinə həsr olunmuş IV Beynəlxalq elmi konfransın materialları, – Bakı: – 1 – 4 may – 2013, – s. 193-195.
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3. Azərbaycan-Avropa İttifaqı əməkdaşlığının əsas istiqamətləri: Şərq Tərəfdaşlığı // Azərbaycanşünaslığın aktual problemləri, Ümummilli Lider H.Əliyevin anadan olmasının 95-ci ildönümünə həsr olunmuş IX Beynəlxalq elmi konfransının materialları, – Bakı: – 3 – 4 may – 2018, – s. 156-158.
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17. Value divergences and their impact on Azerbaijan-European Union relations // III. International Artuklu Congress on Economic, Administrative, and Political Sciences, Mardin: Artuklu University, 27 – 29 november – 2025, – p.36-45.
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Address: AZ 1001, Baku, Lermontov street, 74

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