



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

Plenary sitting

10.5.2011

B7-0329/2011

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for the debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 122 of the Rules of Procedure

on Azerbaijan

Marie-Christine Vergiat

on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

European Parliament resolution on Azerbaijan

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Azerbaijan and, in particular, that of 17 December 2009 on freedom of expression in Azerbaijan¹,
 - having regard to the declaration of the Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy Stefan Füle on 18 April 2011,
 - having regard to the declaration of the local EU delegation on Recent arrests of Youth Activists of 10 March 2011,
 - having regard to the declarations of the EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on Azerbaijan's Supreme Court judgment of 19 August 2010 concerning two youth organisation members of 24 August 2010, on the parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan of 8 November 2010 and on the release of bloggers in Azerbaijan of 19 November 2010,
 - having regard to Rule 122(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas, against the background of popular uprisings in the Arab world, attempts at online activism and public expressions of political discontent in Azerbaijan were violently suppressed on 11 March, 2 April and 17 April 2011,
- B. whereas mainly representatives of the 2 opposition parties, the Musavat Party and the Popular Front Party, were trying to mobilise and were calling for political reforms and the end of corruption in the country,
- C. whereas more than 150 activists were arrested in March and at least 30 of them sentenced afterwards to different terms of detention on charges for misdemeanour between five to thirteen days,
- D. whereas activists were detained by the police even before the planned Days of protests in April and were placed in custody, charged for "disobeying police orders" and sentenced to administrative detention ranging from five to thirteen days, which would keep them locked up beyond the protest day,
- E. whereas more than 200 activists were arrested on 2 April 2011, including the head of the Youth Organisation of the Musavat Party, Tural Abbasli, and the chairman of the Popular Front Party, Hasan Karimov,
- F. whereas Abbasli and other activists Babek Hasanov, Mahammad Majidli, Sahib Karimov, Ulvi Guljyev, Elshan Hasanov, Arif, Hajili were remanded in custody afterwards by the Sabail district court after being sentenced to 2 months' detention on a charge of organising

¹ OJ C 286E, 22.10.2010, p. 27

mass disorder, whereas if convicted, they face a prison sentence of up to three years,

- G. whereas, according to a lawyer representing activist Majidli, the court did not hear any witness testimony or view any evidence to support charges against his client,
- H. whereas the Azerbaijani authorities have also initiated criminal proceedings in absentia against France-based activist Elnur Majidi, who helped to develop the facebook page calling for the 11 March and 2 April 2011 protests,
- I. whereas Azerbaijan's Prosecutor General Zakir Garalov said, that "the radical opposition wants to bring the experience of other countries to Azerbaijan" and that "the government will never tolerate this and all its actions will be suppressed",
 - 1. Condemns the continued detention, trials and sentencing on political grounds of civil society representatives and opposition leaders;
 - 2. Demands that the Azerbaijani authorities immediately and unconditionally release and rehabilitate all those detained on political grounds;
 - 3. Condemns all escalating pressure, harassment and intimidation of representatives of the Azerbaijani opposition and independent media as well as violations of the fundamental human rights such as freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and freedom of the media;
 - 4. Reminds the Azerbaijani authorities that the existence and unhindered political action of democratic political parties and of a strong, independent and lively civil society is of vital importance for the proper functioning of any democratic state;
 - 5. Recalls that full respect for OSCE and Council of Europe commitments in the fields of democracy and human rights are basic elements in the neighbourhood policy of the EU and recommends the way of dialogue to overcome existing problems in Azerbaijan;
 - 6. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the President and the Parliament of Azerbaijan, and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE.