



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

Plenary sitting

22.5.2012

B7-0258/2012

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for a 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
(2012/2654(RSP))

Monica Luisa Macovei, Mario Mauro, Cristian Dan Preda, Roberta Angelilli, Bernd Posselt, Elena Băsescu, Eija-Riitta Korhola, Sari Essayah, Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris, Giovanni La Via, Laima Liucija Andrikienė, Eduard Kukan, Bogusław Sonik
on behalf of the PPE Group

**European Parliament resolution on Azerbaijan
(2012/2654(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Azerbaijan,
 - having regard to a new National Action Programme on increasing the effectiveness of the protection of human rights and freedoms in the Republic of Azerbaijan approved by the President of the country on 27 December 2011,
 - having regard to the Pardon Decrees signed by the President of Azerbaijan on 26 December 2011 and 17 March 2012,
 - having regard to the statement of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media of 18 April 2012 on violence against Azerbaijani journalists,
 - having regard to the Country Progress Report on Azerbaijan of 15 May 2012,
 - having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) between Azerbaijan and the European Union, which entered into force on 1 July 1999,
 - having regard to Rule 122 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Azerbaijan is actively participating in the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership and is committed to respecting democracy, human rights and the rule of law, which are core value of those two initiatives;
- B. whereas since 15 July 2010 negotiations have been launched on an EU-Azerbaijan Association Agreement based on joint commitments to a set of shared values, covering a wide range of areas, including political dialogue, justice, freedom and security, as well as trade and cooperation in sectoral policies;
- C. whereas the respect of the rule of law, the freedom of speech and human rights are fundamental principles of the EU, and lie at the heart of the political dialogue between the EU and Azerbaijan;
- D. whereas the 2012 Eurovision Song Contest taking place on 26 of May in Baku should be an opportunity for Azerbaijan to show its commitment to democracy and human rights;
- E. whereas Azerbaijan has always been a place for coexistence and tolerance among various faiths, ethnic groups and philosophies and promotes inter-religious and intercultural dialogue based on mutual respect and understanding;

- F. whereas the opposition was allowed to hold rallies in March and April 2012, which were held in a peaceful manner;
- G. whereas human rights organisations have expressed concerns about the respect for freedom of expression in Azerbaijan;
1. Calls on the Azerbaijani authorities to continue their efforts to strengthen democracy and rule of law as well as to respect its international commitments related to democracy and human rights; takes note of legislative work accomplished by the Azerbaijani authorities with a view to bringing laws in conformity with EU standards and call for proper implementation of this legislation;
 2. Condemns the harassment, intimidation, and violence against journalists and others peacefully expressing their opinions; calls for the immediate release of journalists Khadija Ismailova, Idrak Abasov, Anar Bayramli, Ramil Dadashov, Vugar Gonagov, Zaur Guliyev, Aydin Janiyev, Avaz Zeynalli; social media activist Bakhtiar Hajiev; lawyer and NGO leader Vidadi Isganderov; human rights activist and lawyer Taleh Khasmammadov and others in detention on spurious criminal charges; calls on the Azerbaijani authorities to allow peaceful protests and to ensure that all incidents of harassment and violence are promptly and effectively investigated; welcomes the fact that the Azerbaijani authorities have created a special group to investigate such cases;
 3. Calls on the Azerbaijani authorities to bring legislation on elections, freedom of assembly, freedom of association and media freedom into line with international standards and ensure its full implementation;
 4. Welcomes the broad discussions on the adoption of a law on defamation within the Azerbaijani society, close cooperation with OSCE in this regard, and intentions of the Azerbaijani authorities to adopt the draft law before the end of the year, which is currently under consideration of the Azerbaijani Parliament;
 5. Expresses support to the Azerbaijani authorities for the positive development of the established political dialogue with the opposition; welcomes the fact that the demonstration held in Baku's Bibiheybet district was peaceful and that, for the first time in five years, the Government negotiated with opposition leaders on a location for the demonstration and there was no violation of public order and no one was detained;
 6. Strongly condemns terrorism in all forms and manifestations, and highly values the contribution of Azerbaijan to the fight against terrorism and extremism at regional and international level;
 7. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Government and Parliament of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Council and the Commission.