



Plenary sitting

8.9.2015

B8-0860/2015

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 135 of the Rules of Procedure

on Azerbaijan
(2015/2840(RSP))

Cristian Dan Preda, Eduard Kukan, Tunne Kelam, Patricija Šulin, Lorenzo Cesa, Brian Hayes, Claude Rolin, Giovanni La Via, Marijana Petir, Jiří Pospíšil, Jarosław Wałęsa, Bogdan Brunon Wenta, Davor Ivo Stier, Andrej Plenković, Therese Comodini Cachia, Csaba Sógor, Mariya Gabriel, Tomáš Zdechovský, Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz, Barbara Kudrycka, László Tóké, Monica Macovei, Ivan Štefanec, Jaromír Štětina, David McAllister, Pavel Svoboda, Michaela Šojdrová, Tadeusz Zwiefka, Luděk Niedermayer, Róza Gräfin von Thun und Hohenstein, József Nagy, Stanislav Polčák, Dubravka Šuica, Andrey Kovatchev, Lara Comi, Roberta Metsola
on behalf of the PPE Group

**European Parliament resolution on Azerbaijan
(2015/2840(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the situation in Azerbaijan,
 - having regard to the Protocol 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, on a Framework Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Azerbaijan on the general principles for the participation of the Republic of Azerbaijan in Union programmes (05618/2014),
 - having regard the remarks by President of the European Council Donald Tusk following his meeting with President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev,
 - having regards to the joint statements of the High Representative/Vice President Mogherini and the Commissioner Hahn with regards to the recent detentions and imprisonment of the leading journalists and human rights defenders,
 - having regarded the ENP Country Progress Report of 25 March 2015,
 - having regard to Rule 135 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. Whereas during the last few months the situation with the human rights in Azerbaijan has been deteriorating having being accompanied with pressure and intimidation of independent journalists and human right defenders,
- B. Whereas since July 2014 numerous prominent human rights defenders and independent journalists have been imprisoned on politically motivated charges, including Leyla Yunus, director of the Institute for Peace and Democracy and her husband Arif Yunus; Rasul Jafarov, chair of Azerbaijan’s Human Rights Club, Intigam Aliyev, chair of the Legal Education Society, Hassan Huseyni, head of the Intelligent Citizen Enlightenment Centre Public Union, and Khadija Ismayilova, an independent journalist,
- C. Whereas in 2014 the opposition leaders, Ilgar Mammadov and Tofiq Yaqublu, were imprisoned following their participation in the protest, and Rasim Aliyev, journalist, has died after having been assaulted and seriously beaten by unknown assailants,
- D. Whereas the EU and Azerbaijan continue working on the new upgraded contractual relations which was reaffirmed during the recent visit of President Aliyev to Brussels;
- E. Whereas the EU and Azerbaijan are committed to mobility, exchange and cooperation and a significant number of Azerbaijanis have benefited of the entry into force of the Visa Facilitation Agreement,

- F. Whereas the sectoral cooperation is mutually beneficial, especially in energy sector, whereas Azerbaijan has a potential to become one of the major commercial partners for EU,
1. Expresses its serious concern over the continuing deterioration of the human rights situation in the country, reminds that the EU attaches special importance to human rights and fundamental freedoms in the bilateral cooperation, which are key elements of the Eastern Partnership and also pillars on which international organisations are founded on, such as the Council of Europe, Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which Azerbaijan is a member of;
 2. Reminds that the President of the European Council Donald Tusk and President Aliyev have agreed to upgrade cooperation to Strategic Partnership which would give a new impetus to cooperation given that it is to be based on the shared democratic values and principles;
 3. Stresses that these imprisonments distance Azerbaijan from democratic values and international commitments, as well as these grave incidents encroach into the independent journalism, spreads fear, as well as jeopardizes overall human right situation in the country;
 4. Invites Azerbaijani authorities to revisit the cases in a transparent and fair process, as well as to address procedural shortcomings, witnessed by international monitors during the trials;
 5. Expresses particular concerns regarding the health of human rights activists Leyla and Arif Yunus and calls on the Azerbaijan authorities to release them immediately on compassionate grounds;
 6. Calls upon Azerbaijan to respect and implement its commitments undertaken as a member of the Council of Europe and improve the situation of democracy and human rights in the country;
 7. Invites the government to develop a more conducive political and legal environment for civil society, as well as to deeply analyze the grave shortcomings in judicial practice aiming to establish trust in independent judiciary;
 8. Calls to promote a safer environment for journalists, human rights defender, as well as civil society representatives as those constitute the foundation of the democratic society;
 9. Welcomes effective bilateral cooperation and invites Azerbaijan to involve more actively into the multilateral dimension of the Eastern Partnership as it would allow to establish better relations with the partner countries and discover new opportunities for multilateral cooperation;
 10. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the EEAS, the Governments and Parliaments of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the EU Member States, and the UN Human Rights Council.

