



*Delegation to the EU-Armenia and EU-Azerbaijan Parliamentary Cooperation Committees
and the EU-Georgia Parliamentary Association Committee*

STATEMENT

BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE DELEGATION, MEP Sajjad KARIM

**on the adoption of an urgency resolution
on Azerbaijan, notably the case of Mehman Huseynov**

Strasbourg, 17 January - “In my capacity as Chair of the Delegation for relations with the South Caucasus, I have witnessed and supported the warming of relations between Azerbaijan and the EU. The last meeting of our Parliamentary Cooperation Committee, held on 7-8 May 2018 in Baku, was a resounding success: we took stock of Azerbaijan’s role as a key energy partner for the EU and transport hub in the region, and we lauded its stability and spirit of tolerance, while stressing at the same time the importance to address fundamental issues of democracy and human rights.

The EU, as a champion of democracy, human rights and free speech across the globe, should not and must not turn a blind eye to the mistreatment of any individual by any government. No matter how exciting and how extensive the progress in international agreements may be, we must not abandon the individuals they are designed to benefit.

With these individuals in mind, there is much in the resolution that our Parliament must reinforce by calling on the Commission and EEAS to seek, and indeed, Azerbaijan to provide, adequate protections for those accused of these crimes. Guarantees of medical assistance, access to legal counsel and family visits must be found as a priority for all individuals listed in this resolution.

The strong relationship that we have built with Azerbaijan has already paid dividends and the granting of access to the EU Delegation to visit anti-corruption blogger Mehman Huseynov is a positive precursor to resolving the situation.

Our relations must always reflect our values, but equally they must always have respect for all of our partners.

In the resolution which they passed today, the Members of the European Parliament call on the Azerbaijani authorities to see that Mehman Huseynov - as well as other imprisoned political prisoners, journalists and political activists - be promptly released from jail.

In its recommendation of 4 July 2018 on the negotiations on the EU-Azerbaijan Comprehensive Agreement, the European Parliament recalled its position, as already expressed in its recommendation of 15 November 2017 on the Eastern Partnership, seeking that all political prisoners and prisoners of conscience be released and that the conditions be put in place to allow for the civil society's legitimate activities, before any agreement is signed.

The European Parliament will closely monitor the situation throughout the negotiations on the new, far-reaching agreement between the EU and Azerbaijan.”

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