

# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

1999



2004

---

*Session document*

20 October 2003

B5-0449/03

## MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

tabled for the debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 50 of the Rules of Procedure

by Pernille Frahm and Luigi Vinci

on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

on the situation of human rights in Turkmenistan and the Central Asia republics

PE 337.883

## Resolution on the situation of human rights in Turkmenistan and the Central Asia republics

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan,

A. Pointing out that the respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law are a fundamental element of the Partnership and Cooperation agreements with the different Central Asia Republics;

B. Whereas these values are founding elements of the OSCE as well as of which the Central Asia republics are members;

C. Whereas the already appalling human rights situation in Turkmenistan deteriorated dramatically recently and there is evidence that this Central Asian state has become one of the worst totalitarian systems in the world;

D. whereas Turkmenistan has consistently ignored its obligations under major human rights treaties it is a party to and it has systematically failed to implement recommendations contained in the March 2003 report by the OSCE's Special Rapporteur on Turkmenistan and the April 2003 resolution by the UN Commission on Human Rights;

E. whereas Turkmenistan remains a one-party state dominated by President-for-life Saparmurat Niyazov where civil and political rights, including freedoms of expression, religion, association and assembly are severely limited and ethnic minorities face large-scale discrimination;

F. whereas following an alleged coup d'état the authorities have proceeded to mass arrests and credible allegations of torture and ill-treatment against government critics and their relatives;

G. whereas persecution of relatives has included house evictions, confiscation of property and dismissals from jobs;

H. whereas several opponents to the regime have been convicted to terms up to life imprisonment in grossly unfair and farcical trials with no access to independent observers and several of them have died in custody, including Amanmuhamed Yklymov, brother of opposition member Sapar Yklymov, living in exile in Sweden, Anton Panfilov, brother of Olga Panfilova, wife of Yklym Yklymov, Batyr Berdyev, former Turkmenistan ambassador to OSCE, and Vekil Durdyev, another former high-level governmental official;

I. whereas the government has declared Rukhnama, a "holy" book written by the President, as the new spiritual guide, the study of which has become mandatory in the country's schools, universities, and state bodies;

L. whereas Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan have consistently flouted human rights provisions contained in their Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the EU engaging in a variety of rights abuses including the repression of political opponents and the muzzling of independent media;

M. Whereas in Tajikistan censorship and harassment of journalists continue, media are under constant pressure from the authorities and anyone who writes a critical piece is likely to be called for questioning;

1. Strongly condemns all human rights abuses in Turkmenistan and urges the Turkmenistan authorities and President Niyazov in particular to engage in a constructive dialogue with the United Nations, the European Union and OSCE, so to implement the recommendations listed in the resolution adopted in April 2003 at the 59th session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, as well as the recommendations made by the OSCE-appointed in his March 2003 report;

2. Considers essential that those convicted for their opinions are granted a new trial based on procedures which meet international standards of fairness and with participation of independent observers;

3. Calls in particular the Turkmenistan authorities:

- to stop use of torture and to respond about the several detained dead in custody,
- to grant access to political prisoners by their relatives and the International Committee of the Red Cross,
- to ensure freedom of religion without threat of imprisonment or harassment and to repeal the presidential ruling that restricts registration of religious groups,
- to ensure that non-governmental organisations and civil society activists are able to carry out their peaceful activities free from persecution and be allowed to register and operate freely,
- to allow access to free flow of information, included unimpeded use of the internet and restoration of subscription to foreign periodicals;

4. Calls for the immediate release of all the political prisoners and prisoners of conscience with regard in particular to the opposition leader Galymzhan Zhakiyanov and journalist Sergei Duvanov in Kazakhstan, of the opposition leader Felix Kulov in Kyrgyzstan and the opposition leader Muhammad Bekjanov and human rights activist and independent journalist Ruslan Sharipov;

5. Calls on the Commission to increase and strengthen TACIS-democracy programmes for these countries aiming in particular at promoting media freedom and the independence of the judiciary;

6. Calls on the Council to adopt a Common Strategy for the Central Asia Republics so as to make more effective, consistent and coherent the relations of the EU with these countries;

7. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the President and the Parliament of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan the United Nations, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the government of Russia and the Secretary General of OSCE