

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2004



2009

Session document

6 June 2005

B6-0364/2005

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

Pursuant to Rule 115(5) of the Rules of Procedure

by Pasqualina Napoletano, Jan Marinus Wiersma and Hannes Swoboda

on behalf of the PSE Group

on Azerbaijan

PE 357.496

B6-0364/2005

European parliament resolution on Azerbaijan

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the recommendations in the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Report on the presidential elections of 15 October 2003,
 - having regard to the joint recommendations on the Electoral Law and the Electoral Administration in Azerbaijan by the Venice Commission and the OSCE/ODIHR of 1 June 2005,
 - having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and the Republic of Azerbaijan, signed in July 1999 in which respect for democracy, principles of international law and human rights are enshrined,
 - having regard to the recommendations of the 6th meeting of the EU-Azerbaijan Parliamentary Cooperation Committee which met in Baku on 18-19 April 2005,
 - having regard to Azerbaijan's inclusion in the European neighbourhood policy and the decision to implement Action Plans for the three countries of the South Caucasus,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and in particular to Articles 19 and 21 which guarantee the right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly,
 - having regard to the EU Presidency's statement on Azerbaijan of 19 May 2005 welcoming President Ilham Aliyev's decree on improving the practice of elections in Azerbaijan,
 - having regard to the forthcoming parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan in November 2005,
 - having regard to Article 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas opposition parties were refused permission by the Mayor of Baku to hold a rally in Baku on 21 May 2005, contradicting the spirit of the 12 May 2005 Presidential decree which ordered the local administration to authorize political rallies and find appropriate venues for them,
- B. whereas an attempt by the opposition to hold the rally on 21 May 2005 in Baku met with violence and police brutality against individuals taking part in the rally, a number of whom were detained for several days,
- C. whereas on 31 May 2005 the Azerbaijani authorities detained dozens of youth activists for distributing leaflets,

- D. whereas this is not the first time the authorities have used excess force to suppress the opposition: in October 2003, following disturbances surrounding the widely criticised presidential elections, seven members of the opposition were arrested and given five-year prison sentences but were later pardoned,
- E. whereas in light of the parliamentary elections to be held in November 2005, President Ilham Aliyev issued an Executive Order on 11 May 2005 on 'Improvement of the Election Practices in the Republic of Azerbaijan',
1. Strongly condemns the disproportionate use of force by the police on 21 May 2005 against members of the opposition and youth movement activists exercising their right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly;
 2. Notes that the arrest and detention of opposition activists was politically motivated and calls on the Azerbaijani Government to take expedient steps to release all those still detained and to ensure that the proper legal proceedings are followed;
 3. Strongly condemns the assassination of the journalist Elmar Huseynov in March 2005 and reiterates its support for pluralism, democracy and the rule of law; calls on the authorities to do everything possible to bring the perpetrators to justice; urges the government to lift restrictions imposed on the media and to curb the harassment, intimidation and detention of journalists who dare to criticise the government;
 4. Urges the government to implement the Council of Europe recommendations on the treatment of political prisoners following extensive, credible allegations of torture and ill-treatment;
 5. Welcomes the Presidential decree instructing the executive authorities to ensure freedom of assembly, the compilation of accurate voter lists, that each candidate has equal access to the media and that citizens are not persecuted for their political beliefs; calls on the authorities to ensure that this decree and further reforms are fully implemented in line with international standards at all levels;
 6. Calls on the government to ensure that the forthcoming parliamentary elections in November will be free and fair and that opposition activists and candidates will not suffer repression in any shape or form;
 7. Emphasises that the further development of EU relations with Azerbaijan will continue to depend on the progress made towards democratisation and reform in the country;
 8. Supports the continuing dialogue between the Azerbaijani government and the OSCE/ODIHR and the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe, and welcomes the report of ODIHR Needs Assessment Mission in June;
 9. Calls on the EU ambassadors to Azerbaijan to do everything in their power to urge the Azerbaijani authorities to speed up reforms and to respect the international agreements and conventions to which it is a signatory;

10. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Parliaments and Governments of the Member States, the Government and Parliament of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and the Parliamentary Assemblies of the OSCE and the Council of Europe.