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B6-0379/2005

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

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

by Marianne Isler-Beguin and Cem Ozdemir

on behalf of the Green Group/European Free Alliance

on Azerbaijan

B6-0379/2005

European parliament resolution on the violation of human rights in Azerbaijan

The European Parliament

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Azerbaijan and South Caucasus with regard, in particular, to its resolution with a European Parliament recommendation to the Council on EU policy towards the South Caucasus of 26 February 2004,
- having regard to its resolution on “Wider Europe - Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours (COM(2003) 104 - 2003/2018(INI))” of 20 November 2003,
- having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation agreement with Azerbaijan which entered into force on 1 July 1999,
- having regard to the Country Report on Azerbaijan of 2 March 2005,
- having regard to the EU Statement on Azerbaijan of 19 May 2005,
- having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas the Council decided to extend the European Neighbourhood Policy to the three countries of South Caucasus as requested by the European Parliament,

B. stressing that the European Neighbourhood Policy is aimed at projecting peace and stability in EU bordering countries in the perspective of closer cooperation and sharing values of democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights and civil liberties,

C. deeply concerned by the events which took place on 21 May 2005, when the police violently prevented hundreds of opposition activists from staging an unauthorised rally in Baku and arrested 45 protesters,

D. having regard to the demonstration of the opposition forces which took place smoothly in Baku on 4 June 2005 after an agreement had been reached with the authorities,

E. alarmed by the situation surrounding the opposition media and cases of abuse and attacks on opposition journalists as well as threats and acts of defamation, pressure and harassment against human rights defenders,

F. pointing to the conclusions of the OSCE that the municipal elections of December 2004 “fell short of a number of international standards for democratic elections” although the election day was generally assessed as acceptable and some technical improvements were reported in comparison with the previous elections,

G. pointing to the conclusions of the OSCE report on trial monitoring in Azerbaijan published on 4 February 2005, which urges the government of Azerbaijan to undertake a prompt and wide-ranging investigation of all allegations of torture and mistreatment, as well as an investigation into the use of excessive force,

H. considering the generally difficult social and political situation linked to the unresolved conflict of Nagorno-Karabakh, which resulted in the occupation of portions of the Azerbaijani territory by Armenia with vast numbers of refugees and IDPs placing a burden on the country,

1. Regrets the unwillingness of the Baku authorities to deny authorisation for the rally of the opposition forces on 21 May 2005 and deplors the disproportionate reaction of the police against the demonstrators;
2. Welcomes the release of all the people arrested and calls for a full investigation into the events, including the responsibility of the policemen;
3. Takes the view that the Action Plan for Azerbaijan should be focused on the development of a genuine democracy and the respect for human rights and the rule of law; urges the Commission, in this regard, to coordinate its action with the Council of Europe and to make every effort to support and develop the fragile Azerbaijani civil society;
4. Welcomes the decision of the Azerbaijani authorities to pardon 114 people imprisoned in connection with public disturbances in the direct aftermath of the 2003 Presidential Elections, including the seven opposition leaders who had been convicted of taking part in the mass protest; takes the view that this might represent a positive step towards the establishment of political pluralism in Azerbaijan and calls for the release of all the remaining political prisoners;
5. Firmly condemns the assassination of opposition journalist Elmar Huseynov in March 2005; takes note of the rapid reaction and steps taken by the Azerbaijani authorities and calls for an independent and transparent inquiry;
6. Welcomes the Commission's recommendations on a significant intensification of relations with Azerbaijan and urges the Commission to continue to provide the necessary assistance to the Azerbaijani Government so that it implements the legal and institutional reforms in the field of human rights and the rule of law;
7. Calls on the Azerbaijani authorities to ensure that the parliamentary elections scheduled to take place in November 2005 will fully meet recognised international standards and the shared values common to the European Neighbourhood Policy;
8. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission and the President, Government and Parliament of Azerbaijan.