

# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2004



2009

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*Session document*

24.10.2005

B6-0558/05

## **MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION**

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Commission

pursuant to Rule 103(2) of the Rules of Procedure

by Charles Tannock, Árpád Duka-Zólyomi, Vytautas Landsbergis, Elisabeth Jeggle and Bernd Posselt

on behalf of the PPE-DE Group

on Azerbaijan

**European Parliament resolution on Azerbaijan**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with Azerbaijan of 1 July 1999,
  - having regard to the Council's decision of 14 June 2004 to include Azerbaijan together with Armenia and Georgia in the European Neighbourhood Policy,
  - having regard to its previous resolutions on Azerbaijan and the South Caucasus and, in particular, its resolution of 9 June 2005,
  - having regard to its resolution on 'Wider Europe - Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours' of 20 November 2003,
  - having regard to the Commission's Country Report on Azerbaijan of 2 March 2005,
  - having regard to the final statement and recommendations of the sixth meeting of the EU-Azerbaijan-Parliamentary Cooperation Committee of 18-19 April 2005,
  - having regard to the statement of the UK Presidency of the Council of the EU on Azerbaijan of 6 October 2005,
  - having regard to Azerbaijan's membership of the Council of Europe, to the European Convention on Human rights and to the numerous resolutions adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on Azerbaijan, in particular the resolution of 22 June 2005,
  - having regard to the interim reports by the OSCE Election Observation Missions of September and October 2005,
  - having regard to the Transparency International 2005 Corruption Perceptions Index published on 18 October 2005,
  - having regard to Rule 103(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the parliamentary elections of 6 November 2005 represent a decisive test for Azerbaijan and its commitment to democracy, the rule of law and protection of human rights as undertaken by accession to the European Convention on Human Rights and other international treaties,
- B. whereas the European Union expresses its deep concern about stability, democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights in Azerbaijan as formulated by the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP),

- C. whereas the ENP Action Plan for Azerbaijan, which sets jointly defined key priorities in selected areas for the next five years, is in the process of being drafted,
- D. whereas the Commission has suspended negotiations with the countries of the South Caucasus within the ENP after the opening of a Northern Cyprus - Baku air route, underlining that if a solution is not found the Commission will approach the South Caucasus states individually and resume the negotiations only with Armenia and Georgia,
- E. whereas, after multiple calls from the European institutions addressed to the Azerbaijani officials, the fundamental right of opposition political parties to hold public meetings and demonstrations before the parliamentary elections was repeatedly restricted and dozens of protesters were beaten and arrested by law enforcement units,
- F. whereas opposition media and journalists have experienced a disturbing decline in press freedom, threats, acts of defamation and psychological pressure, despite the proclaimed reforms, which still need to be intensified in order to grant a balanced access to all parties,
- G. whereas, with a view to the parliamentary elections in November 2005, President Ilham Aliyev issued an Executive Order on 12 May 2005 on 'Improvement of Election Practices in the Republic of Azerbaijan',
- H. whereas on 24-25 October the OSCE Minsk Group's US, Russian and French co-chairs will meet in Washington to discuss the current stage of the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process and in particular their planned meeting with the Azeri and Armenian Foreign Ministers in Ljubljana,
- I. whereas President Ilham Aliyev warned Armenia on 8 September of his country's ability to forcibly return the Armenian-controlled enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh and announced that Azerbaijan will double its defence expenditure in 2006 to \$ 600 million,
1. Deplores the refusal of the Azerbaijani authorities to grant authorisation for opposition rallies in the requested places in the centre of Baku and condemns disproportionate and violent measures taken by the police against the demonstrators, in particular on 25 September;
  2. Calls for the immediate release of all detained persons and asks for full and fair investigations into the abovementioned events, including the responsibility of the law-enforcement units, and urges Azerbaijan to guarantee the inherent and inalienable fundamental rights of detained persons;
  3. Calls on the Azerbaijani authorities to restore the freedom of assembly guaranteed for all political parties and candidates, and to ensure, in legal terms and in practice, that the parliamentary elections fully meet internationally recognised standards as well as the recommendations of the OSCE/ODIHR and Venice Commission, and calls on all parties in the forthcoming elections to conduct their campaigns in a peaceful manner;
  4. Deplores that on 17 October 2005 the Azerbaijani authorities refused entry to Rasul Guliyev, a leading opposition figure who has registered as a candidate for the elections;

5. Stresses that any violence against journalists and the media must be stopped and that their independent status must be recognised; urges the Azerbaijani authorities to do everything within their power to bring to justice those responsible for the murder of Elmar Husseinow, editor of the opposition news magazine 'Monitor';
6. Welcomes the decision of the courts of Azerbaijan to delete the criminal records of prominent opposition leaders for criminal offences in connection with public disturbances in the direct aftermath of the 2003 presidential elections and thus to secure their eligibility to participate as candidates in parliamentary elections;
7. Urges the Azerbaijani authorities to effectively tackle corruption in the country, in particular by increasing resources for educational programmes and introducing the necessary legislative framework to efficiently promote coordination of efforts by the government and the civil sector to combat corruption;
8. Takes the view that the Action Plan for Azerbaijan should be focused on the development of genuine democracy and respect for human rights and the rule of law; calls on the Commission, in this regard, to coordinate its action with the Council of Europe and to make every effort to support and develop civil society in Azerbaijan;
9. 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;
10. Calls upon the Azerbaijani Government to solve the problem created by the opening of direct air flights between Baku and Northern Cyprus in order to ensure that cooperation within the ENP is not developed only with Armenia and Georgia;
11. Feels strongly that the Minsk Group offers the necessary mechanism for the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue, including the territories around Azerbaijan, fully supports the efforts made since the beginning of the year by the Azerbaijani and Armenian governments to improve dialogue and believes that both Azerbaijan and Armenia will be able to emerge from the talks as winners;
12. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the parliaments and governments of the Member States, the President, the Government and the Parliament of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and the Parliamentary Assemblies of the OSCE and the Council of Europe.