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## MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for the debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 122 of the Rules of Procedure

on freedom of expression in Azerbaijan

**Helmut Scholz, Marie-Christine Vergiat**  
on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

**European Parliament resolution on freedom of expression in Azerbaijan**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Azerbaijan and in particular those of 9 June 2005 and 27 October 2005,
  - having regard to its resolution of 15 November 2007 on Strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy,
  - having regard to its resolution of 17 January 2008 on a more effective EU policy for the South Caucasus,
  - having regard to the EU Presidency statement of 12 November 2009 on Azerbaijan,
  - having regard to the statement of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe on 12 November 2009 "Freedom of expression under pressure in Azerbaijan",
  - having regard to Rule 122 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Azerbaijan is actively participating in the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership and is committed to respect democracy, human rights and the rule of law that are core values of these two initiatives,
- B. whereas in September 2009 the Council decided to enhance the relations between the EU and the three countries of the South Caucasus and invited the Commission to prepare draft negotiating directives for new agreements replacing the present Partnership and Cooperation Agreements due to expire soon,
- C. whereas two young men, Emin Milli and Adnan Hajizada, on-line journalists, were arrested on 8 July after being attacked by two other men in a restaurant in the capital Baku;
- D. according to witness Emin Abdullayev interviewed by Amnesty International the two persons were assaulted;
- E. whereas Emin Milli and Adnan Hajizada were known for using online networking tools including Youtube, Facebook and Twitter to disseminate political and social commentaries, sometimes critical about the situation in Azerbaijan;
- F. whereas on 11 November 2009 Baku's Sabail district court sentenced the two bloggers to 2.5 years and to 2 years of imprisonment on charges of hooliganism and inflicting minor bodily harm,

1. Deplores the sentencing on 11 November 2009 of the bloggers Emin Milli and Adnan Hajizada to long prison terms for unclear charges in a trial from which the public was excluded;
2. Regards the legal charges leading to such long sentences disproportionate, calls for a new open and transparent investigation, considering all witnesses and also the inclusion of the other party in the restaurant fight;
3. Calls for a new open trial in accordance with international standards to exclude allegations about lack of independence of police and judiciary;
4. Deplores the series of negative developments in relation to the media and individual journalists in Azerbaijan listed in the [Background Report on Respect for Media Freedom](#) recently prepared for the Committee on Culture, Science and Education of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, as well as the concerns expressed by international NGOs such as the Committee to Protect Journalists, Reporters Without Borders, International Pen and Human Rights Watch;
5. Reminds the Azerbaijani authorities of their obligations to meet the conditions for the upgrading of contractual relations as stipulated in the Declaration by the European Council on the Eastern Partnership of 19-20 March 2009, notably in the area of democracy, the rule of law and human rights;
6. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission and to the President and the Parliament of Azerbaijan.