



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

Plenary sitting

22.5.2012

B7-0253/2012

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

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

pursuant to Rule 122 of the Rules of Procedure

on Azerbaijan
(2012/2654(RSP))

Charles Tannock
on behalf of the ECR Group

**European Parliament resolution on Azerbaijan
(2012/2654(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolution on Azerbaijan, notably those concerning human rights in particular that of 12 May 2011,
- having regard to the statement by the spokesperson of the Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy of 18 April 2011
- having regard to the statements of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media on the attack on journalists of 10 March 2011 and of 28 March 2011
- having regard to the Statement by the spokesperson of the EU High Representative Catherine Ashton of 12 October 2011,
- having regard conclusions on the EU-Azerbaijan Cooperation Council Twelfth meeting, Brussels, 25 November 2011,
- having regard to the Foreign Affairs Council conclusions of 26 July 2010 on the ENP
- having regard to the Commission communication of 3 December 2008 on Eastern Partnership (**COM(2008)0823**)
- having regard to Rule 122 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - A. whereas Azerbaijan is actively participating in the ENP and EaP and its committed to respecting democracy, human rights and the rule of law, which are core value of those two initiatives.
 - B. whereas around 300 protesters took part in unsanctioned gatherings which called for the release of political prisoners before Azerbaijan hosts the Eurovision Song Contest on May 22 through 26
 - C. whereas after two separate peaceful protests were broken up by police in the capital city Baku on Monday 14 May, where opposition party members were specifically targeted.
 - D. whereas Azerbaijan is actively participating in the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the Eastern Partnership and is committed to respecting democracy, human rights and the rule of law, which are core values of these two initiatives,

- E. the respect of the rule of law, the freedom of speech and human rights is a fundamental principle of the EU, and lies at the heart of the political dialogue between the EU and Azerbaijan,
- F. whereas Azerbaijan will take up a non-permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for the period of 2012 - 2013, and has committed to uphold the values as expressed in UN human rights charter;
- G. whereas Azerbaijan is a member of the Council of Europe and a signatory to the European Convention on Human Rights.
1. Calls to Azerbaijani authorities to continue their efforts strengthen democracy and rule of law as well as to respect its international commitments related to democracy and human rights;
 2. Calls to Azerbaijani authorities to take immediate steps to lift bans on public protests in central Baku and to bring to justice all those responsible for the police abuse;
 3. Stresses that the right to free speech is fundamental to a free and democratic society as well as to the protection and promotion of other rights; calls on the Azerbaijani authorities to refrain from using the articles of the criminal law to stifle free debate on religion;
 4. Calls to Azerbaijan authorities for release political activist such as **Bakhtiyar Hajiyev**, a former parliamentary candidate in the November 2010 election in Azerbaijan, also Ahad Mammadli, Rufat Hajibeyli, Fuad Gehremanli, Mahammad Majidli, Sahib Karimov;
 5. Welcome the release of **Elnur Majidli**, an opposition activist, on May 15 was unexpected. He was freed after a court hearing at the prison, based on a request he put forward to a local court. Majidli was arrested at a peaceful demonstration in Baku on April 2, 2011, together with hundreds of other demonstrators, who had taken to the streets inspired by the uprisings in the Middle East. He had been sentenced to two years in prison;
 6. Calls to Azerbaijani authorities to hold the peaceful protests in the center of Baku. The government should hold people, who have chosen to use the attention drawn to Azerbaijan by Eurovision to get their voices heard, to protest publicly without interference;

7. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the governments and parliaments of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Islamic Republic of Iran, the EEAS, European Council, European Commission, UN Human Rights Council.