

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

1999



2004

Session document

22 October 2003

B5-0436/2003 }
B5-0440/2003 }
B5-0445/2003 }
B5-0449/2003 }
B5-0450/2003 }
B5-0452/2003 } RC1

JOINT MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

pursuant to Rule 50(5) of the Rules of Procedure, by

- John Bowis and Albert Jan Maat on behalf of the PPE-DE Group
- Richard Corbett and Margrietus J. van den Berg on behalf of the PSE Group
- Ole Andreasen on behalf of the ELDR Group
- Bart Staes, Joost Lagendijk, Matti Wuori, Per Gahrton and Marie Anne Isler Béguin on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group
- Pernille Frahm on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group
- Bastiaan Belder on behalf of the EDD Group

replacing the motions by the following groups:

- PSE (B5-0436/2003),
- ELDR (B5-0440/2003),
- EDD (B5-0445/2003),
- GUE/NGL (B5-0449/2003),
- PPE-DE (B5-0450/2003),
- Verts/ALE (B5-0452/2003),

on Turkmenistan, including Central Asia

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PE 337.870}
PE 337.874}
PE 337.879}
PE 337.883}
PE 337.884}
PE 337.886} RC1

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European Parliament resolution on Turkmenistan, including Central Asia

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan,
 - having regard to its report on the human rights situation in the world in 2003,
 - having regard to the partnership and cooperation agreement between the EU and Turkmenistan, signed in May 1998, which is not yet in force, and the partnership and cooperation agreements with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, which include a human rights clause,
 - having regard to the EC Strategy Paper for Central Asia 2002-2006,
 - having regard to the EU statements on Turkmenistan of 19 December 2002, 20 March 2003 and 3 April 2003,
 - having regard to the EU Presidency declarations on Turkmenistan of 10 December 2002 and 20 January 2003,
 - having regard to the resolution of the UN Commission on Human Rights of 16 April 2003 on the situation of human rights in Turkmenistan,
 - having regard to Turkmenistan's obligations under the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and other major human rights treaties,
- A. whereas Turkmenistan is consistently violating all its obligations under the above-mentioned international Conventions,
- B. whereas the already appalling human rights situation in Turkmenistan has deteriorated dramatically recently, and there is evidence that this Central Asian state has acquired one of the worst totalitarian systems in the world,
- C. whereas Turkmenistan has consistently ignored its obligations under the major human rights treaties it is a party to, and has systematically failed to implement the recommendations contained in the March 2003 report by the OSCE's Special Rapporteur on Turkmenistan and the April 2003 resolution of the UN Commission on Human Rights,
- D. whereas Turkmenistan remains a one-party state where civil and political rights, including the freedoms of expression, religion, association and assembly, are severely limited and ethnic minorities face large-scale discrimination,

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- E. whereas the deterioration of the health and education systems in Turkmenistan has led to the closure of important scientific and cultural institutions and the departure of skilled and qualified people,
- F. whereas under the Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organisations, religious congregations are required to register with the government, and since re-registration of religious organisations was made compulsory in early 1997, only two groups – the Russian Orthodox Church and the Sunni Muslims – have obtained registration, while all others face heavy discrimination,
- G. whereas those belonging to religious groups that are not officially sanctioned have been denied any public religious activities and have faced imprisonment, deportation, internal exile, eviction and harassment for years,
- H. whereas political prisoners are reportedly ill-treated, serving long-term sentences after unfair trials, and are denied necessary medical treatment,
- I. whereas, following an alleged coup d'état in November 2002, the authorities have proceeded to carry out mass arrests and there have been credible allegations of torture and ill-treatment of critics of the government and their relatives,
- J. whereas the persecution of relatives has included evictions, confiscation of property and dismissals from jobs,
- K. whereas several opponents of the regime have been sentenced to terms going up to life imprisonment in grossly unfair and farcical trials with no access to independent observers, and some of them are reported to have died in custody,
- L. whereas the Halk Maslakhaty (People's Council) has issued a decree declaring all criticism of the President and his policies to be treason, punishable by penalties going up to life imprisonment,
- M. whereas the government has declared Rukhnama, a 'holy' book written by the President, to be the new spiritual guide, the study of which has become mandatory in the country's schools, universities, and state bodies,

On Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan

- N. whereas in Kazakhstan an improvement in the country's human rights record has been tempered by media censorship and cases of trials not considered fair by OSCE standards,
- O. whereas in Kyrgyzstan respect for human rights has been tempered by examples of harassment of opposition figures, journalists, workers for non-governmental organisations and human rights activists,

- P. whereas in Tajikistan respect for human rights has improved in recent years, but limitations on freedom of expression and freedom of conscience and the frequent recourse to the death penalty mean there is still much reform needed for the country to meet the human rights provisions in its Partnership and Cooperation Agreements with the EU,
- Q. whereas in Uzbekistan there is partial progress in developing the rule of law and openness of the media, and many NGOs are allowed to work in the country, but there is still a suppression of free speech and violation of human rights that has been illustrated and exacerbated by the case of the Uzbek journalist Ruslan Sharipov, who has been tried in camera and sentenced to four years' imprisonment on charges of homosexual conduct,

On Turkmenistan

1. Deplores the deterioration of the human rights situation in Turkmenistan;
2. Calls on the government of Turkmenistan to implement all the recommendations in the resolution adopted in April 2003 at the 59th session of the UN Commission on Human Rights, as well as the recommendations made by the OSCE-appointed rapporteur Professor Emmanuel Decaux in his March 2003 report;
3. Urges the Turkmen authorities to respect Turkmenistan's obligations under international law and stop the attacks on and torture and ill-treatment of political opponents;
4. Calls on the government of Turkmenistan to conduct impartial and thorough investigations into all the reports of the deaths in custody of Amanmukhamed Yklymov, A. Prokofiev and the former parliamentary Speaker, Tagan Khallyev;
5. Calls on the government of Turkmenistan to conduct impartial and thorough investigations into all allegations of torture and ill-treatment against those in custody, including the former Foreign Ministers of Turkmenistan, Amb. Boris Shikhmuradov and Amb. Batyr Berdyev and the former head of the Presidential Administration, Amb. Yazgeldi Gundogdyev, to bring to justice those found responsible, and to provide full reparation to the victims;
6. Calls on the Turkmenistan government to immediately and unconditionally release all prisoners of conscience, including Nikolay Shelekhov and Kurban Zakirov and the political prisoner Mukhametkuli Aymuradov, convicted in 1995 in an unfair trial;
7. Calls on the Turkmenistan government to ensure that all those convicted in connection with the 25 November 2002 events as well as all other political prisoners who were sentenced following unfair trials are granted a retrial in procedures which meet international standards of fairness, and also to ensure that independent observers are granted access to the trials;
8. Calls on the Turkmen authorities to allow the International Committee of the Red Cross access to prisoners;

9. Calls on the Turkmen authorities to allow non-governmental organisations and civil society activists to carry out their peaceful activities free from harassment and persecution and to register and operate freely;
10. Calls on the Turkmen authorities to ensure that independent observers are granted access to criminal trials;
11. Calls on the government of Turkmenistan to allow the registration of opposition political parties, free from the threat of imprisonment, detention or harassment;
12. Calls on the government of Turkmenistan to respect the principle of religious freedom, abolish all restrictions on activities of religious minorities, and repeal the presidential ruling that restricts registration of religious groups;
13. Calls on the government of Turkmenistan to move swiftly towards democracy and the rule of law, to conduct democratic elections under the supervision of international observers, and to restore the legitimate power of Parliament;
14. Calls on the government of Turkmenistan to end the policy of forced internal resettlement, withdraw the clause prohibiting dual citizenship from the Constitution, abolish the compulsory exit visas, and restore the right to study abroad;
15. Calls on the government of Turkmenistan to uphold the right of freedom of movement by, among other things, repealing, permanently and immediately, the exit visa requirement, the residence permit requirement and the policy of forced internal resettlement;

On Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan

16. Welcomes the release of the political prisoner Mukhtar Ablyazov by the Kazakh authorities;
17. Calls on the government of Kazakhstan to unconditionally release the remaining political prisoners, notably Galymzhan Zhakiyanov, co-founder of the Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan, and Sergei Duvanov, an independent journalist;
18. Calls for the immediate release of the opposition leader Felix Kulov in Kyrgyzstan and the opposition leader Muhammad Bekjanov in Uzbekistan;
19. Urges the government of Kazakhstan to reform the laws on criminal defamation which have hampered press freedom by making all criticism of government officials liable to punitive defamation suits, which often result in prohibitively large fines that newspapers or magazines are unable to pay, forcing them to close down;
20. Expresses similar concerns, to a lesser degree, over freedom of the press in Kyrgyzstan;

21. Calls on the government of Kyrgyzstan to respect the principles of freedom of speech and assembly and to declare a moratorium on arbitrary civil suits taken out by government officials against journalists and independent media outlets;
22. Calls on the government of Tajikistan to respect the principles of freedom of speech and expression by ensuring an end to pressure on and intimidation of journalists;
23. Calls on the government of Uzbekistan to end the climate of persecution and fear affecting human rights activists, to respect the principles of freedom of speech and expression, and to release Mr Ruslan Sharipov immediately;
24. Calls on the Committee on Foreign Affairs to examine, within its working group on human rights, the human rights situation in the countries of Central Asia: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan;
25. Calls on the Commission to develop and strengthen the TACIS democracy programmes for these countries, with a view, in particular, to promoting media freedom and the independence of the judiciary;
26. Calls on the Council to adopt a Common Strategy for the Central Asian Republics, so as to make the relations of the EU with those countries more effective, consistent and coherent;
27. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Government of Turkmenistan, the Government of Kazakhstan, the Government of Kyrgyzstan, the Government of Tajikistan and the Government of Uzbekistan.