# Resolution on Azerbaijan: the Ramil Safarov case

2012/2785(RSP) - 13/09/2012 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 58 votes to 13 with 5 abstentions a resolution on Azerbaijan: the Ramil Safarov case.

The resolution was tabled by the ECR, S&D, GUE/NGL, EPP and Greens/EFA groups.

It **deplores the decision by the President of Azerbaijan to pardon Ramil Safarov**, a convicted murderer sentenced by the courts of a Member State of the European Union. Members recall that Ramil Safarov, a lieutenant of the Azerbaijani armed forces, had been jailed in a Hungarian prison since 2004 after brutally killing an Armenian colleague during a course sponsored by NATO's Partnership for Peace Programme in Budapest. Mr Safarov had pleaded guilty and had expressed no remorse, defending his action on the grounds that the victim was Armenian. On 31 August 2012 Mr Safarov, who had been convicted of murder and sentenced to life imprisonment in Hungary, was transferred to Azerbaijan at the longstanding request of the Azerbaijani authorities, and was pardoned by the Azerbaijani President immediately after the transfer. Members state that the presidential pardon runs contrary to the spirit of the Convention on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons.

Parliament **regards that decision as a gesture which could contribute to further escalation of the tensions between two countries**, and which is exacerbating feelings of injustice and deepening the divide between those countries. It is further concerned that this act is jeopardising all peaceful reconciliation processes within the societies concerned and may undermine the possible future development of peaceful people-to-people contact in the region. It deplores the hero's welcome accorded to Mr Safarov in Azerbaijan and the decision to promote him to the rank of major and pay him eight years' back salary upon his arrival, and is concerned about the example this sets for future generations and about the promotion and recognition he has received from the Azerbaijani state.

Parliament expresses its support for the ongoing efforts of the European External Action Service (EEAS), the EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and Member States to defuse tensions and ensure that progress is made towards peace in the region. It reiterates its position that the association agreement currently being negotiated between the EU and Azerbaijan should **include clauses and benchmarks relating to the protection and promotion of human rights and the rule of law**.

Members support the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group in their efforts to secure substantial progress in the peace process in Nagorno-Karabakh with a view to finding a lasting, comprehensive settlement in accordance with international law. They take the view that the frustration in Azerbaijan and Armenia over the lack of any substantial progress as regards the peace process in Nagorno-Karabakh does not justify either acts of revenge or futile provocations that add further tension to an already tense and fragile situation. Parliament insists that the **EU should play a stronger role in the settlement of the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh** by supporting the implementation of confidence-building measures which will bring together Armenian and Azerbaijani communities and spread ideas of peace, reconciliation and trust on all sides.