Resolution on Azerbaijan: the case of Ilgar Mammadov

2013/2668(RSP) - 13/06/2013 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on Azerbaijan, **strongly condemning the detention of Ilgar Mammadov,** leader of the opposition REAL movement who was arrested by Azerbaijani authorities on 4 February 2013 and has been unlawfully detained since then.

The resolution was tabled by the S&D, Greens/EFA, ALDE, ECR, GUE/NGL and EPP groups. It calls for Mr Mammadov's **immediate and unconditional release** and an end to his prosecution, and urges the Azerbaijani authorities to investigate the charges against him in a speedy, fair, transparent and independent manner.

Members note that the **overall human rights situation in Azerbaijan has deteriorated continuously** over the last few years despite the adoption of the ENP Action Plan, with intimidation of, NGOs and independent media, engendering a widespread sense of fear among opposition forces, human rights defenders and youth and social network activists and leading to self-censorship among journalists. They call on the Republic of Azerbaijan to **respect freedom of the press and freedom of assembly** and on the EU to assist efforts to consolidate democracy and the rule of law.

Whilst supporting the ongoing negotiations on an **EU-Azerbaijan association agreement**, Parliament reaffirms its position that such an agreement must include clauses and benchmarks relating to the protection of human rights, especially with regard to freedom of the media, freedom of expression, freedom of association and freedom of assembly, which reflect the principles and rights enshrined in the Azerbaijani constitution and the commitments made by Azerbaijan within the Council of Europe and the OSCE.

Furthermore, the European External Action Service (EEAS) is asked strictly to apply the **'more for more' principle,** with a specific focus on inclusive, free and fair elections, the independence of the judiciary, democratic reforms and fundamental rights and freedoms, and clearly to lay down the consequences of lagging behind in relation to reforms. The EU Delegation in Baku must continue to pay close attention to human rights concerns during the forthcoming election cycle, showing support for human rights defenders by attending events organised by civil society and speaking out on their behalf, closely monitoring court trials and supporting media freedom.

Lastly, Parliament calls on Commission President José Manuel Barroso to speak out on the EU's human rights concerns vis-à-vis Azerbaijan, as outlined in the last ENP progress report, during President Ilham Aliyev's planned visit to Brussels.