Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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Harassment of investigative journalists in Azerbaijan reporting on corruption

Motion for a resolution
tabled by Ms Arpine HOVHANNISYAN and other members of the Assembly

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This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

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Harassment of investigative journalists reporting on corruption in Azerbaijan including on the highest level is a matter of grave concern for the Parliamentary Assembly. The case of Khadija Ismayilova is the most vivid example of this practice employed by the Azerbaijani authorities to silence the criticism directed against them. In this regard, several international governmental and non-governmental organisations continue to voice their concerns about what they consider to be fabricated charges.

Transparency International placed Azerbaijan on 127 position in its 2013 Corruption Perception Index, which is another indication of the scale and widespread nature of corruption in country.

Azerbaijan is among those countries, which still considers defamation as a criminal offence. Moreover, recently adopted legislation extended defamation on the on-line media as well. In light of this information as well as recent deterioration of the situation with regard to freedom of expression in Azerbaijan reported both by the Commissioner of Human Rights of the Council of Europe and by the relevant and credible international non-governmental organisations, there is an urgent need, notwithstanding the report on the Protection of Freedom of Media in Europe due in 2015, to assess the specific situation in regard with investigative journalists who report on corruption in Azerbaijan.

The Parliamentary Assembly considers that steps should be urgently taken to protect journalists and activists from intimidation and reiterates its call to the authorities of Azerbaijan to release immediately all persons imprisoned because of views or opinions expressed.

Signed (see overleaf)

Signed[1]*:*

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1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EDG: European Democrat Group
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialist Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left