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Political prisoners in Azerbaijan

Written question No. 666 to the Committee of Ministers
by Mr Pieter OMTZIGT, Netherlands, Group of the European People's Party

Since its accession to the Council of Europe, the issue of political prisoners in Azerbaijan has been on the agenda.

Amnesty International considers Leyla Yunus, Arif Yunus, Rasul Jafarov, Intigam Aliyev, Abdul Abilov, Sardar Alibeyli, Anar Mammadli, Faraj Karimov, Siraj Karimov, Hilal Mammadov, Ilgar Mammadov, Omar Mammadov, Rashad Ramazanov, Yadigar Sadigov, Tofig Yagublu, Rashadat Akundov, Mammad Azizov, Bakhtiyar Guliyev, Zaur Gurbanli, Rashad Hasanov, Uzeyir Mammadli, Shahin Novruzlu and Ilkin Rustamzade as prisoners of conscience in prisons in Azerbaijan.

Anar Mammadli was awarded the Václav Havel Human Rights Prize 2014 in the Parliamentary Assembly on 30 September 2014. Emin Huseynov, Rasul Jafarov and Intigam Aliyev, with whom I organized a side event at the June 2014 session of the Parliamentary Assembly on Human Rights in Azerbaijan, are also all in prison now.

Nils Muižnieks, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, stated at the Committee of Ministers that all the interlocutors of the Council of Europe in Azerbaijan are now in prison.

One of the commitments of Azerbaijan before joining the Council of Europe was to free those prisoners who had been put behind bars for political reasons.

Mr Omtzigt,

To ask the Committee of Ministers

– What actions did the Committee of Ministers already take, or will take, to free political prisoners in Azerbaijan while that country is chairing the Committee of Ministers?

– Does the Committee of Ministers have an updated list of political prisoners in Azerbaijan – enabling it to assess whether their number have increased or decreased – and is it willing to make it public?