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The definition of political prisoner

Written question No. 667 to the Committee of Ministers
by Mr Pieter OMTZIGT, Netherlands, Group of the European People's Party

In reply to my question about political prisoners in Azerbaijan, Mr Elmar Mammadyarov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan and Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers, stated that *"The Council of Europe does not have a definition for political prisoners. When the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe creates criteria to define political prisoners, I can respond to your question, otherwise it is very hypothetical.*" (Doc AS (2014) CR 34, report of 34th sitting on 2 October 2014).

I am afraid Mr Mammadyarov's answer is wrong:

– See Parliamentary Assembly Resolution 1900 (2012), adopted on 3 October 2012, entitled: "*The definition of political prisoner* ";

– See also, in this connection, the Committee of Ministers decision, taken shortly after Azerbaijan's accession to the Council of Europe, which confirmed the existence of political prisoners in Azerbaijan: "The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe welcomes the news that the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan has issued... a decree pardoning 89 political prisoners…" and that Azerbaijan "undertook to release or grant a new trial to all political prisoners" (CM/Del/Dec(2001)765bis, Item 2.4).

Mr Omtzigt,

To ask the Committee of Ministers:

– Does the Committee of Ministers agree with the above-cited statement made by its Chairperson and is it able to give a full answer to my original question, since its Chairperson clearly stated that a list of political prisoners in Azerbaijan can be given, if a definition exists.