

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-002876/24
to the Commission
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(11 December 2024)**

Subject: Call for the release of Dr Gubad Ibadoghlu and other political prisoners in Azerbaijan

Dr Gubad Ibadoghlu, renowned government critic and shortlisted 2024 Sakharov Prize nominee, has been detained in Azerbaijan since July 2023. Consequently, his participation to attend the Sakharov Prize award ceremony at the European Parliament next week has not been confirmed.

Dr Ibadoghlu's health deteriorated sharply because of the authorities' refusal to provide him with adequate medical treatment for his chronic health condition. Parliament has on several occasions called for Dr Ibadoghlu's immediate release in order for him to obtain urgent medical care abroad.

The situation for dissenting voices in Azerbaijan is catastrophic. The UN Climate Change Conference (COP29) in Baku highlighted how strongly opposition and civil society is being silenced.

Despite this crackdown on the population, the EU has intensified its relations with Azerbaijan, including importing gas. In its resolution of 24 October 2024 on the situation in Azerbaijan, violation of human rights and international law and relations with Armenia ⁽¹⁾, Parliament called for the suspension of the energy trade and for any future partnership agreement to be conditional on the release of all political prisoners and improvements in the human rights situation.

1. What concrete and immediate steps will the Commission take to secure the release of Sakharov Prize nominee Dr Ibadoghlu and other political prisoners?
2. How quickly is the Commission ready to disengage, given the non-cooperation of the Azerbaijani Government?

Submitted: 11.12.2024

**Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas on behalf of the European Commission
(7 February 2025)**

The EU has repeatedly voiced its concerns regarding the intensification of repression against civil society, political opponents, and independent media in Azerbaijan.

In this context, the EU continues to raise the case of Dr Ibadoghlu, both in direct contacts with the authorities and in public statements, urging the authorities to lift his travel ban in order for him to obtain the urgent medical attention he requires abroad ⁽¹⁾.

Moreover, the EU Delegation in Azerbaijan and the EU Special Representative for Human Rights have repeatedly raised his case with the Azerbaijani authorities. The EU Delegation is also in direct contact with Dr Ibadoghlu and his lawyers, and regularly attends the court hearings in his case.

Moreover, on the occasion of his official visit to Azerbaijan in October 2024, the Commissioner for Climate Action met Dr Ibadoghlu.

The EU Delegation also facilitated the organisation of a meeting between Dr Ibadoghlu and the European Parliament Delegation, which visited Baku in November 2024 during the United Nations Climate Change Conference 'COP29'.

The EU's relation with Azerbaijan is based on a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement that entered into effect in 1999 ⁽²⁾. The EU engagement with Azerbaijan remains instrumental in order to address human rights issues and to promote peace, stability and prosperity in the South Caucasus through regional cooperation, including in the context of the normalisation process between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

¹ Texts adopted: P10_TA(2024)0029.

⁽¹⁾ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/azerbaijan-statement-spokesperson-human-rights-situation_en; https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-10-2024-10-22-ITM-020_EN.html; https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-10-2024-12-18-ITM-019-03_EN.html

⁽²⁾ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/agree_international/1999/614/oj/eng