



Subject: PACE: The problem of 30 million Azerbaijanis living in Iran (Southern Azerbaijan) to get access to education in their mother tongue

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190 years ago – as a result of the war between Iran and Russia in accordance with the Gulistan treaty of 1813 and the Turkmenchay treaty of 1828, Azerbaijan was divided into two parts – Southern Azerbaijan was placed under the authority of Iran, Northern Azerbaijan under Russia.

Northern Azerbaijan gained independence as the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic in 1918–1920, when Southern Azerbaijan established independent government in the years 1945–1946. Unfortunately, both of the above-mentioned states lost their independence resulting foreign pressure.

Azerbaijan Democratic Republic lost its sovereignty when Soviets invaded the country and it became part of the USSR, however, in 1991, its independence was restored as the Republic of Azerbaijan.

At present there is a population of 8 million in the Republic of Azerbaijan, but the number of ethnic Azerbaijanis living in a compact way in Iran is close to 30 million. Unfortunately, these Azerbaijanis do not have the opportunity to receive education in their mother tongue in that country.

A number of Council of Europe member states have close political, economic, scientific–cultural relations with Iran and, even if Iran is not a European country about 30 million Azerbaijani compatriots, share the same linguistic and moral–cultural values as the citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan. If they had the opportunity to obtain the right to education in their

mother tongue they would be able to conserve and develop their identity, at least to read books, newspapers published in the Republic of Azerbaijan, to acquire the national as well as European values, to acquire a more European way of thinking and behaviour with a view of membership of Azerbaijan in the Council of Europe.

The Parliamentary Assembly believes that the provision of conditions by the Iranian government for establishing primary, middle and higher schools for the ethnic Azerbaijani population living in Iran will be a sign of dealing with for the essential rights of the major national minority.

The Parliamentary Assembly therefore calls the Committee of Culture, Science and Education to examine this problem and prepare the report.