The capture of the Council of Europe

Gerald Knaus
Oslo May 2014
A very good deal – January 2013
Another victory
(Strasbourg, January 2013)

125 : 79
They defeated a resolution on political prisoners in Azerbaijan

review old cases

ensure there are no new cases of political prisoners

refraining from prosecuting participants in peaceful demonstrations;

refraining from criminalising the expression of political and religious views in the media...
Who defeated this resolution?

All 18 Russian members
All 10 Turks
All 9 Spaniards
All 9 Italians
a majority from Ukraine (7), UK (7) France (7)

Those who lost:
All 11 German members
All 6 Swedes
All Baltic members
Most Swiss, Finns, Norwegians
Reaction

„The rapporteur has to accept that the Council of Europe belongs to Azerbaijan, not to him“

(24 January 2013, ANS Press)
Some votes have consequences …
... a wave of arrests ...

Rashadat

and many more N!DA activists
May 2014: a hunger strike ...

THEY ARE ON HUNGER STRIKE
… while he presented the program of the new chair of the Council of Europe (14 May, 2014): youth, rule of law, human rights education
“Beyond Shame”

“Human Rights Watch began in 1978 with the creation of Helsinki Watch, designed to support the citizens groups formed throughout the Soviet bloc to monitor government compliance with the 1975 Helsinki Accords. Helsinki Watch adopted a methodology of publicly "naming and shaming" abusive governments …”

HRW, Our History
Oceania in 2050: Newspeak

Autocracy = Democracy
„Stolen elections“ = „free and fair elections“
Autocratic consolidation = democratic progress
Political prisoner = criminal
Dissident = hooligan
Counter-revolution in Strasbourg

Election monitoring 2010 and 2013 – political prisoners resolution – monitoring accession criteria ….
What to do? Take the “good words” back

democracy
free and fair elections
moving towards democracy
political prisoner / dissident
Take the institutions seriously!

Action from Committee of Ministers

Next secretary general: what platform?
Look back to the founders: against forgetting prisoners
Institutionalise concern

Elect NEW Rapporteur for political prisoners

Set up Independent Commission for political prisoners
Focus on “surrogate villains”

www.pacewatch.org

Focus on violators: EU visa ban commission
Inspiration for change - N!DA’s court speech - 5 May 2014
“The clarity of our fundamental principles, and our loyalty to them, our complete rejection of radicalism, immorality and violence are the reasons why hundreds of people with a similar ideology joined our cause in the course of the past year.”
Live not by lies

“Solshenitsyn in his “Live Not By Lies” wrote about despotic regimes’ dependence on everyone’s participation in the lies. He wrote that the simplest and most accessible key to our self-neglected liberation lies right here: Personal non-participation in lies. This is what NIDA does.”
BHAG:
2015 Europe without political prisoners

Launch this this summer
www.esiweb.org