



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Permanent Council Nr 1013 Vienna, 14 August 2014

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#### **EU Statement on the situation of human rights and civil society in Azerbaijan**

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The European Union is deeply concerned about the continuing deterioration of the situation of human rights and civil society in Azerbaijan.

In particular, we note with dismay the recent actions against several prominent human rights defenders, including Dr. Leyla Yunus and her husband Dr. Arif Yunus, Mr Rasul Jafarov, and Mr Intigam Aliyev. These add to the impression that the authorities are systematically restricting the space for public discourse and civil society in Azerbaijan.

We call on the Azerbaijani authorities to guarantee the welfare of all those detained. We are concerned that Dr. Leyla Yunus continues to be held in pre-trial detention despite her serious health condition and we urge the authorities of Azerbaijan to ensure that all necessary medical care is provided.

Furthermore, we are concerned about recent amendments to legislation which severely restricts the functioning of NGOs in Azerbaijan.

These actions are detrimental to the international reputation of Azerbaijan and weaken its own political interests.

The European Union has repeatedly made its serious concerns known to the government of Azerbaijan, including during the visit of European Commission President Barroso to Azerbaijan on 14 June 2014.

The European Union reiterates that it values its relationship with Azerbaijan. However, this relationship cannot achieve its full potential unless Azerbaijan fully respects its international commitments.

The candidate countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO, ICELAND\*\* and ALBANIA, and the EFTA county NORWAY, member of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

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\* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

\*\* Iceland continues to be a member of EFTA and the European Economic Area.