



PC.DEL/821/12
6 September 2012

EUROPEAN UNION

ENGLISH only

**OSCE Permanent Council Nr 923
Vienna, 6 September 2012**

EU statement on the release of Ramil Safarov

The EU would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the statement by the spokespersons of Catherine Ashton, EU High Representative, and Štefan Füle, European Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy, on the release of Ramil Safarov, issued 3 September 2012:

"The High Representative and Commissioner Füle are concerned by the news that the President of Azerbaijan has pardoned Azerbaijani army officer Ramil Safarov, who was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of Armenian Army officer Gurgun Margaryan in Budapest in 2004.

Ramil Safarov was transferred from Hungary to Azerbaijan on 31 August on the basis of an Azerbaijani request, in the framework of the Convention of Strasbourg on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons of 21 March 1983, to serve the rest of his sentence. EU representatives are in contact with the relevant authorities and will continue to follow the situation closely.

In the interest of regional stability and on-going efforts towards reconciliation, the High Representative and Commissioner Füle reiterate their call on Azerbaijan and Armenia to exercise restraint, on the ground

as well as in public statements, in order to prevent an escalation of the situation."

The EU would also like to welcome the statement issued by the Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group on 3 September 2012, which was read out in the Permanent Council today by the representative of France, in the name of the three countries co-chairing the Minsk Group, and in which they expressed their deep concern and regret for the damage the pardon and any attempts to glorify the crime have done to the peace process and trust between the sides.

The Acceding Country Croatia*, the Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Iceland+ and Serbia*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA country Norway, member of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

* Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

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