



**PC.DEL/892/04
17 September 2004**

ENGLISH only

**Statement
at 525th meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council
16 September 2004**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It gives me a pleasure to join all previous speakers in warmly welcoming OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media distinguished Mr. Mikloş Haraszti to this meeting and thank him both for his informative written report and oral statement.

As Mr. Haraszti rightly mentions in his report, some of the cases pertaining to the media in Azerbaijan have been addressed in the letter sent by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan in reply to Mr. Haraszti's earlier inquiry. As far as the remaining cases are concerned necessary information will be provided when the relevant legal proceedings are completed. In one case the court decision has not been handed down yet, while in the second one the appeal provisions are to be enacted.

Taking this opportunity I should like to reaffirm the readiness and willingness of my Government to continue constructive and fruitful cooperation with the Office of Representative on Freedom of the Media. We thank the Representative for the assistance provided to our country so far.

We also hope that Mr. Haraszti will be able to use the invitation extended to him and will pay a visit to Azerbaijan this year.

Mr. Chairman,

Please allow me to wish the distinguished Representative and his able staff all the best in their professional activities.

With regard to the reference by the European Union to cases of alleged abduction and beating of journalists let me stress that we have provided relevant information in an official letter of the Foreign Ministry of Azerbaijan addressed to Mr. Haraszti. Had I known in advance about the particular interest of the EU in getting this information I would have probably been more specific, giving relevant information provided by the Azerbaijani police authorities. Since we do not enjoy the privilege to be informed in advance about issues pertaining to my country to be raised at the PC by the European Union I will have to limit myself to the following brief information:

Criminal cases were opened on both of the alleged incidents in order to ascertain the facts and to bring perpetrators to justice. The first criminal case was closed due to the lack of collected credible evidence, which could allow to continue criminal proceedings. The investigation into the second incident is still underway and information on the results will be made available to the OSCE community in due course.

Thank you.