

Spanish Presidency of the European Union

ENGLISH only

**OSCE Permanent Council No. 812
Vienna, 10th June 2010****EU statement on Azerbaijan**

Since April several demonstrations in the centre of Baku, involving members of opposition parties, were immediately dispersed by police forces. Several demonstrators were detained while some of them were sentenced to administrative fines and/or detention.

Against this background, the EU recalls the great importance it attaches to freedom of assembly. The EU would also welcome improvement concerning the implementation rules for the application of the Azerbaijani legislation on Freedom of Assembly, and in particular the lifting of undue restrictions referring to the venues of demonstrations, in compliance with international practices and Azerbaijan's commitments to OSCE and Council of Europe.

To ensure the fairness of the electoral process in the run-up to next autumn's Parliamentary elections, equal access to mass media, in particular to public television, should be guaranteed for all parties. In addition, pluralistic composition of the electoral commissions and

comprehensive monitoring by independent observers are of crucial importance. These changes would mark tangible progress in the democratic development of Azerbaijan.

The EU stands ready to continue its support to the Azerbaijani authorities to further modernisation reforms in Azerbaijan guided by the values laid down by the OSCE, Council of Europe and the EU. Finally the EU would like to reiterate the importance it attaches to intensified relations with Azerbaijan and we invite the Azerbaijani Government to make full use of the opportunities offered by the Eastern Partnership and the European Neighbourhood Policy.

Los países candidatos CROACIA* y la ANTIGUA REPÚBLICA YUGOSLAVA DE MACEDONIA*; los países del Proceso de Estabilización y Asociación y los países candidatos potenciales, ALBANIA, BOSNIA Y HERZEGOVINA, MONTENEGRO; los países de la Asociación Europea de Libre Comercio y los miembros del Espacio Económico Europeo, ISLANDIA y NORUEGA se suman a esta declaración.

*Croacia y la Antigua República Yugoslava de Macedonia siguen perteneciendo al proceso de Estabilización y Asociación.