



PC.DEL/665/17  
19 May 2017

ENGLISH only

**EUROPEAN UNION**

**OSCE Permanent Council Nr 1146  
Vienna, 18 May 2017**

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**EU statement on the blocking of five media outlets in  
Azerbaijan**

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The recent unprecedented decision taken by the Sabail district court in Baku on 12 May to block access to five online media outlets is deeply concerning. Respect for freedom of expression is vital in any democratic society.

The European Union has previously voiced its concerns over these developments in our statement delivered two weeks ago in the Permanent Council on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day.

Without freedom of expression and freedom of the media, including online media, an informed, active and engaged citizenry is impossible.

The EU calls upon Azerbaijan to fully respect its international commitments with regards to the right to freedom of opinion and expression, both as an OSCE participating State and as a party to the European Convention on Human Rights.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\* and ALBANIA\*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

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