



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Permanent Council No 1149 Vienna, 8 June 2017

---

#### **EU statement on the Reported abduction and illegal detention of Azerbaijani nationals residing in Georgia**

---

The alleged abduction and arbitrary detention of Azerbaijani nationals, including Afghan Mukhtarli, a journalist residing in Georgia followed by his arrest and prosecution in Azerbaijan, demands a swift, thorough and transparent investigation.

The European Union welcomes the launch of such an investigation in Georgia as announced by its leadership.

We call now on Azerbaijani authorities to also urgently review any and all cases of incarceration related to the exercise of fundamental rights, including the freedom of expression, and to release all of those concerned, in line with Azerbaijan's international commitments.

We furthermore call on Azerbaijan to allow its citizens to fully exercise their human rights and fundamental freedoms, and to lift the unacceptable restrictions imposed on civil society.

We expect that the due process of law is respected, as well as the civil and political rights of all individuals, including those residing in states other than their own.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights clearly state that "no one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention". The OSCE has had commitments echoing this since Vienna 1989, repeated in Copenhagen 1990, Moscow 1991, and Ljubljana 2005. We urge the Azerbaijani authorities to fully comply with the commitments that they freely signed up to.

The European Union will continue to follow these cases closely.

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 country NORWAY, member 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.