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Swedish Presidency of the European Union

**OSCE Permanent Council No. 782
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EU statement on the conviction of two Azerbaijani youth organisation members

The EU has learnt with concern that on 11 November 2009 a district court in Baku sentenced the youth activists Emin Milli and Adnan Hajizade to 2 years and 6 months and 2 years imprisonment respectively.

Recalling our statement in the Permanent Council on 23 July 2009 and referring to the numerous interventions of the international community in this regard over the last four months, we note with deep concern that the trial proceedings did not reflect due process. In particular, we are concerned that the judgement handed down to these two persons did not include any reasoning, in apparent contradiction with the national legislation. The lack of transparency in the investigation, partially closed court hearings, groundless legal charges, and failure to charge properly the assailants are in contradiction with international as well as with corresponding national Azerbaijani legal standards.

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We urge Azerbaijan to review this sentence, in the first instance by means of an appeals trial conducted according to internationally acknowledged legal standards and in a fair and transparent manner or by any other legal means available.

In this context, we recall the verdicts against several Azerbaijani journalists, handed down in October 2009, and in respect of which the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media made an intervention. The EU strongly urges Azerbaijan to respond and react constructively to the concerns raised by Mr. Haraszti.

The EU remains deeply concerned about this and other sentencing of media professionals in Azerbaijan over the past several months. We sincerely hope that this negative trend will be reversed in the immediate future and that steps will be taken in order to further encourage Azerbaijan's civil society and its engagement for democratic reform.

In conclusion, the EU reiterates its support for further political and legal reforms in Azerbaijan aimed at increased convergence with the values and principles promoted both by the OSCE and the EU as well as the Council of Europe, and stands ready to assist the Azerbaijani authorities in their endeavours in this regard.

The candidate countries CROATIA* and the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries ALBANIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA and MONTENEGRO, as well as the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the

European Economic Area ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY align themselves with this statement.

*Croatia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.