



**EUROPEAN UNION**

**OSCE Permanent Council No 1156  
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**EU Statement on the Detention of Azerbaijani Journalist  
Mehman Aliyev**

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The European Union expresses its deep concern over the detention of Azerbaijani journalist Mehman Aliyev, Director of the news agency Turan and one of the independent media voices in the country.

Aliyev was arrested on 24 August and has been detained initially for a period of three months on charges of "tax evasion", "illegal entrepreneurship" and "abuse of authority". The EU has previously expressed its concern regarding the shrinking space for freedom of expression in Azerbaijan and there has been a pattern of politically motivated detentions of journalists and human rights defenders. This development comes after a decision taken by a Baku court on 12 May to permanently block five online media outlets, including online television platforms. Since April 2015 to this date, 29 media freedom restrictions in Azerbaijan have been registered on the Council of Europe platform to promote the protection of journalism and safety of journalists.

The EU echoes the statements by the Representative on Freedom of the Media and the Council of Europe Secretary General, and calls upon Azerbaijan to ensure respect for its international commitments, notably as a party to the European Convention on Human Rights of which Article 10 protects the right to freedom of expression and information. We urge the Azerbaijan government to uphold its commitments on the Rule of Law and ensure Mehman Aliyev's right to a fair trial. Respect for these commitments is an essential foundation to a democratic society. We call on Azerbaijan to cooperate closely with international structures, including the OSCE RFoM in this regard, who called for immediate release of Mehman Aliyev and to

guarantee that the fundamental freedoms of Mehman Aliyev are not violated further.

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, as well as UKRAINE and CANADA align themselves with this statement.

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