



German Presidency of the Council of the European Union

662nd Meeting of the Permanent Council

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EU Statement on Media Freedom in Azerbaijan

The European Union has learned with grave concern that on 20 April, Mr Eynulla Fatullayev, the editor of Realny Azerbaijan and Gundalik Azarbaycan, was sentenced to two and a half years in prison on libel charges. We would like to reiterate our preoccupation, voiced in the Permanent Council on 1 March, that criminal defamation suits initiated by public officials are being used in order to limit media freedom, especially when such suits lead to harsh prison sentences.

The EU fully subscribes to the clear and strong reaction of the OSCE Representative for the Freedom of the Media, Miklos Haraszti, to this sentence. The EU welcomes his current visit to Azerbaijan and calls upon the authorities in Azerbaijan to engage in a constructive dialogue with him. We expect positive developments as a result of this visit. Reiterating its concern about the overall situation of the freedom of the media in Azerbaijan, the EU is looking forward to hearing from Mr. Haraszti about his visit and intends to return to this matter in the near future.

The Candidate Countries Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Serbia, as well as EFTA countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

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