



EUROPEAN UNION

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EU statement on the sentencing of Khadija Ismayilova in Azerbaijan

The European Union would like to draw attention to the statement by High Representative/Vice President Federica Mogherini and Commissioner Johannes Hahn on 1 September on the sentencing of Khadija Ismayilova in Azerbaijan.

“The sentence of seven and half years handed down today to prominent journalist Khadija Ismayilova by an Azerbaijani Court is a sign of the difficult situation faced by independent journalists in Azerbaijan.

The trial raised fundamental questions on the impartiality of the court and the legality of the accusation, as witnessed by the international monitors who were present during the trial. Their access as well as access for national observers was, as in similar cases, irregular and arbitrary, despite regular requests.

We call on Azerbaijan authorities to review her case in a transparent and fair process, in full respect of the country's international commitments, including on media freedom.”

We furthermore express our full support for the interventions by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media on the deteriorating situation in Azerbaijan. The Representative has on numerous occasions raised the case of Khadija Ismayilova, as well as other pressing cases. She has expressed concern regarding intimidation and imprisonment of journalists and members of the media, including the issue of impunity from prosecution of assailants. We once again encourage the government of Azerbaijan to accept the Representative's long-

standing offer to assist Azerbaijan to fully implement its OSCE commitments regarding freedom of expression and of media, including the safety of journalists.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ICELAND+ and ALBANIA* align themselves with this statement.

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

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.