



**EUROPEAN UNION**

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**EU statement on the sentencing of Mehman Huseynov in  
Azerbaijan**

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The two-year sentence handed down on 3 March by a court in Baku to Azerbaijani blogger Mehman Huseynov on a charge of slander, after he reported that he was tortured during a brief incarceration in January, raises serious questions both as regards respect for freedom of expression and due process of law. We therefore fully support the joint statement on 6 March by Representative on Freedom of the Media Dunja Mijatović and ODIHR Director Michael Link, as well as the statement of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Human Rights Committee Chair Ignacio Sanchez Amor.

Mr Huseynov is known in Azerbaijan for his efforts to expose corruption. On the face of it, his sentence appears clearly disproportionate to the alleged crime. Reports of his irregular arrest, alleged ill-treatment, and irregularities in the subsequent court proceedings that ended in his conviction are of equally serious concern and should be immediately investigated. Mr Huseynov should be a witness in a credible and independent investigation of these allegations, seeking accountability for the perpetrators, as appropriate, not in jail.

Respect for freedom of expression is vital in any democratic society. The European Union expects Azerbaijan to respect its international commitments both as regards fundamental freedoms and due process.

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.