JOINT STATEMENT

by the Spokespersons of High Representative Catherine Ashton and Commissioner Štefan Füle on worrying cases of pressure on opposition, civil society and media in Azerbaijan

The Spokespersons of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Commissioner Štefan Füle made today the following statement:

"The High Representative and the Commissioner are concerned about some recent developments in Azerbaijan that have an impact both on the pre-election period and the general human rights and political freedoms situation in the country.

While acknowledging the generally peaceful pre-election environment and the good technical preparation of the elections, the EU notes with concern the continued pressure on a number of opposition activists, civil society and independent media, such as intimidations, arrests on dubious charges, detentions and sentencing without proper respect for international standards and rights of the accused."
The EU expects the Azerbaijani authorities to ensure rapid, transparent and fair investigations and legal procedures in line with Azerbaijani commitments and obligations in this area. This is especially important in order to enable a favourable environment for free and fair Presidential elections on 9 October. It is essential that space for genuine pluralism of opinions is safeguarded, including as part of the electoral process.

The EU will continue to monitor individual cases and human rights developments in Azerbaijan and stands ready to support Azerbaijan in the process of implementing its international commitments. “