JOINT STATEMENT

by the Spokespersons on the amnesty announced by President Aliyev of Azerbaijan

The Spokespersons of Catherine Ashton, the EU High Representative/Vice President, and Štefan Füle, Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, issued the following statement today:

"We welcome the amnesty announced by the President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, on Friday 17 October, leading to the pardon and release of around 80 prisoners including at least four civil society activists.

We greet this amnesty as a positive first step in reversing the trend of recent months. We urge the authorities in Azerbaijan to build upon this step by extending the amnesty to other individuals belonging to civil society organisations who currently face imprisonment.

The relationship between the EU and Azerbaijan is important to us. It has considerable potential to benefit both sides. We share Azerbaijan’s desire for a stable, secure, and prosperous future for the country and remain convinced that an open and inclusive national dialogue, in line with Azerbaijan’s international commitments as a member and current Chair of the Council of Europe, is the best path to achieving this goal."

FOR FURTHER DETAILS:
Michael Mann +32 498 999 780 - +32 2 584 9780- Michael.Mann@eeas.europa.eu @EUVHighRepSpox
Maja Kocijancic +32 498 984 425 - +32 2 298 65 70 - Maja.Kocijancic@ec.europa.eu @AshtonSpox Maja
Sebastien Brabant +32 460 75 09 98 - Sebastien.Brabant@ec.europa.eu
Eamonn Prendergast +32 460 75 32 93 – Eamonn.Prendergast@ec.europa.eu
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