President Ilham Aliyev  
Office of the President  
of the Republic of Azerbaijan  
Istiqlaliyyat Street 19  
1066 Baku  
Azerbaijan

Minister Fikrat Mammadov  
Ministry of Justice  
of the Republic of Azerbaijan  
Inshaatchilar prospekti 1  
1073 Baku  
Azerbaijan

Strasbourg, 17 December 2014

Subject: Call for an immediate release of the investigative journalist Ms Khadija Ismayilova, recently imprisoned by the Azerbaijani authorities.

Your Excellencies,

Last Friday, 5 December 2014, Ms Khadija Ismayilova, a Radio Free Europe/Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) journalist was taken into pre-trial detention, under section 125 of your country’s penal code. If convicted, she will face a prison sentence between three and seven years.

As reported by the international media, the charges came one day after the release of a sixty-page statement by Mr Aliyev’s chief of staff, which heavily criticized Ms Ismayilova’s activities. All international media sources agree in describing the arrest as politically motivated by her investigations into the Azerbaijani ruling elite and by her engagement as a human rights defender.

Despite strong criticism from the international community and protests which took place in Europe and in the US, Ms Ismayilova has remained in pre-trial detention.
As a member of the OSCE and the Council of Europe, Azerbaijan needs to stand fully by its international commitments, and therefore we urge for:

- the immediate release of Ms Khadija Ismayilova and any other journalist facing unfair detention;
- a fair trial and the full respect of adequate procedural guarantees and fundamental rights for suspected and accused persons;
- the lift of her travel ban;
- the end of the intimidation campaign targeted against Ms Ismayilova as an investigative reporter in the last years;
- a stronger recognition of the freedom of press in Azerbaijan, whereas investigative journalism is necessary in a democratic society.

Yours sincerely,

Monica MACOVEI
Dennis DE JONG
Miroslav POCHE
Tomas ZDECHOVSKÝ
Gerben-Jan GERBRANDY
Petras AUSTREVICHIUS
Helga STEVENS
Claude ROLIN
Member of the European Parliament

Jana ŽITŇANSKÁ
Molly SCOTT CATO
Traian UNGUREANU
Elisabetta GARDINI
Marietje SCHAAKE
Ana GOMES
Therese COMODINI CACHIA
Klaus BUCHNER
Sandra KALNIETE
Michaela ŠOJDROVÁ
Josef WEIDENHOLZER
Salvatore Domenico POGLIESE
Csaba SÓGOR
Keith TAYLOR
Member of the European Parliament

Roberts ZILE
Mark DEMESMAECKER
Isabella ADINOLFI
Marco AFFRONTE
Laura AGEA
Daniela AIUTO
Tiziana BEGHIN
David BORRELLI
Fabio Massimo CASTALDO
Ignazio CORRAO
Rosa D'AMATO
Eleonora EVI
Laura FERRARA
Giulia MOI
Member of the European Parliament

Piernicola PEDICINI

Dario TAMBURRANO

Marco VALLI

Marco ZANNI

Marco ZULLO