



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council Nr 984
Vienna, 20 February 2014**

**EU Statement on Recent Amendments to the NGO
Legislation in Azerbaijan**

Mr Chairman, the European Union would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the statement by the EU HR Ashton and Commissioner Füle, on 12 February 2014, on the enactment of amendments to legislation on NGOs in Azerbaijan:

"The High Representative and the Commissioner are concerned by recent amendments to NGO legislation in Azerbaijan restricting the environment for an independent and critical civil society, especially in the field of human rights and democracy.

In view of Azerbaijan's upcoming chairmanship of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers, the High Representative and the Commissioner call upon the Azerbaijani authorities to abide by their international commitments and to review the law on NGOs with a view to addressing the concerns formulated by the Venice Commission. In particular, they call upon the authorities in Azerbaijan to improve and facilitate the registration procedures for international NGOs, creating an environment conducive for all NGOs to carry out their legitimate activities.

The High Representative and the Commissioner acknowledge the recent efforts by the Azerbaijani Government to engage civil society on its proposals to amend NGO legislation. While they recognise that this process led to some changes in the final legislation as adopted, they remain concerned by the overall impact of this legislation on civil society."

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ICELAND+ and SERBIA*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidates ALBANIA and the EFTA country NORWAY, member of the European Economic Area align themselves with this statement.

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia 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.