

**Ilham Aliyev**, President, Republic of Azerbaijan

**Artur Rasizade**, Prime Minister, Republic of Azerbaijan

**Ogtay Asadov**, Speaker of the Parliament, Republic of Azerbaijan

**Elmar Mammadyarov**, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Azerbaijan

**Giorgi Margvelashvili**, President, Georgia

**Giorgi Kvirikashvili**, Prime Minister, Georgia

**Irakli Kobakhidze**, Speaker of the Parliament, Georgia

**Mikheil Janelidze**, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Georgia

**Donald Tusk**, President, European Council

**Jean-Claude Juncker**, President, European Commission

**Antonio Tajani**, President, European Parliament

**Federica Mogherini**, Vice-President of the European Commission, High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

**Johannes Hahn**, European Commissioner for Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations

*16 June 2017*

### **Steering Committee Statement on the EP Resolution on the case of Azerbaijani journalist Afgan Mukhtarli**

The EaP CSF Steering Committee welcomes the adoption of the Resolution on the Case of Azerbaijani journalist Afgan Mukhtarli by the European Parliament on 15 June. It sends a strong message that such cases will not go unnoticed and calls for a thorough investigation of the abduction to be conducted by the Georgian government.

The Steering Committee welcomes the emphasis on democratic reforms, the rule of law, good governance, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms as the core of the new EU-Azerbaijan agreement in paragraph 16. The EaP CSF Steering Committee calls on the European Parliament to take into account the civil society monitoring in its assessment of the situation throughout the negotiations prior to deciding on whether to give its consent.

The resolution strengthens the position of the EU Commissioner for Neighbourhood Policy & Enlargement Negotiations Johannes Hahn, who is visiting Baku on 16 June. In the negotiations with the authorities, he can deliver mutually reinforcing messages of the EU institutions on the need for genuine efforts aimed at improving human rights record of Azerbaijan.

In addition to the names of political prisoners mentioned by the resolution, the SC would like to bring attention to other cases of intimidation by the authorities. For example, on 1 June, Nasimi district court sentenced Aziz Orujov, Baku manager of the Internet television station Channel 13, to 4 months of pre-trial detention. He is accused of illegal entrepreneurship and abuse of his

authority. He and his family members were previously subjected to an inquiry in the framework of a criminal case against local and foreign NGOs in 2014.

We also appeal to the authorities of Azerbaijan to allow Intigam Aliyev to travel abroad in order to receive the medical treatment for his serious blood pressure and circulation condition. Currently, the travel ban precludes him from getting the urgently needed medical care and does not permit him to continue his professional activities as a human rights advocate. Mr Aliyev was imprisoned on political grounds in 2014 and served twenty months of a seven and a half year sentence before being released on probation in March 2016 on humanitarian grounds. However, the relevant courts refuse to give Mr Aliyev the permission to leave the country for his medical treatment.

Taking into consideration that the Steering Committee of the Open Government Partnership initiative will review the status of Azerbaijan at the end of June, we urge to assess the Government's Report on the activity of Azerbaijan in Open Government Partnership and make sure that the Government has addressed the original concerns.

*Members of the Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum*