



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Brussels, 8 January 2008  
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(OR. fr)

**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union  
on the release of 119 prisoners in Azerbaijan**

The European Union welcomes the long-awaited release of five journalists on the occasion of Solidarity Day of World Azerbaijanis.

The presidential pardon is a positive step towards Azerbaijan's fulfilment of international and European obligations with regard to freedom of the press.

The European Union would like to see the three journalists still imprisoned (Mirza Sakit Zahidov, Ganimat Zahid and Eynullah Fatullayev) released or pardoned at the earliest opportunity and would like a moratorium to be declared on proceedings for defamation.

The European Union is convinced that such political gestures could contribute to strengthening the partnership between Azerbaijan and the European Union and would be conducive to a more favourable political atmosphere in the run-up to the electoral campaign.

**P R E S S**

The Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia\* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, and the EFTA countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

\* Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process."

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