



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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(OR. fr)

**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the EU on the
conviction of Eynulla Fatullayev in Azerbaijan**

The European Union is greatly concerned to learn of the conviction of Eynulla Fatullayev, founder and editor of the "Realny Azerbaydzhan" and "Gündelik Azerbaycan" newspapers, and his sentencing on 30 October to eight and a half years imprisonment by the Court of Grave Crimes of Azerbaijan. The charges against him relate principally to an article which he wrote under the pseudonym of Rovshan Bagirov on 30 March 2007.

The European Union is convinced that the use made of the criminal code in the case of this article, which is the expression of a personal opinion, is inappropriate and that the sentence handed down is out of all proportion.

Cases of this kind run counter to Azerbaijan's commitment to the freedoms of expression and opinion, despite the fact that such matters are essential for implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plan concluded in November 2006 and for the development of the partnership between Azerbaijan and the European Union.

P R E S S

The European Union would reiterate the importance of full respect by the Azerbaijan Government for the rights of a free press and the development of independent media in Azerbaijan, and a guarantee by the Government that critical voices will not be silenced.
