



EUROPEAN UNION

Brussels, 3 September 2012
A 389/12

Statement by the spokespersons of EU High Representative Catherine Ashton and Commissioner Štefan Füle on the release of Ramil Safarov

The spokespersons of Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice President of the Commission and Štefan Füle, European Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy, issued the following statement today:

"The High Representative and Commissioner Füle are concerned by the news that the President of Azerbaijan has pardoned Azerbaijani army officer Ramil Safarov, who was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of Armenian Army officer Gurgun Margaryan in Budapest in 2004.

Ramil Safarov was transferred from Hungary to Azerbaijan on 31 August on the basis of an Azerbaijani request, in the framework of the Convention of Strasbourg on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons of 21 March 1983, to serve the rest of his sentence. EU representatives are in contact with the relevant authorities and will continue to follow the situation closely.

In the interest of regional stability and on-going efforts towards reconciliation, the High Representative and Commissioner Füle reiterate their call on Azerbaijan and Armenia to exercise restraint, on the ground as well as in public statements, in order to prevent an escalation of the situation."

P R E S S

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