



*Delegation to the EU-Armenia and EU-Azerbaijan Parliamentary Cooperation Committees
and the EU-Georgia Parliamentary Association Committee*

STATEMENT

BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE DELEGATION, MEP Sajjad KARIM

on the dropping of criminal charges against anti-corruption blogger Mehman Huseynov

Brussels, 22 January - "Today, the criminal charges against anti-corruption blogger Mehman Huseynov have been dropped by the General Prosecutor's Office, upon recommendation from Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev. In my capacity as Chair of the Delegation for relations with the South Caucasus, I very much welcome this positive development, and look forward to seeing Mr Huseynov be promptly released and reunited with his beloved ones. Naturally, I remain convinced that he should not have been imprisoned in the first place, that the due and fair process of law should always prevail and that arbitrary leniency of the President should not be necessary.

I also wish to commend our colleagues from the EU Delegation on their tenacious mobilisation, as their endeavours have certainly contributed to the prompt solving of this case, while providing comfort to Mr Huseynov in these difficult times.

I now call on the Azerbaijani authorities to immediately and unconditionally release all imprisoned political prisoners, journalists, human rights defenders and other civil society activists, and to fully restore their political and civil rights, in line with the European Parliament's recommendation of 4 July 2018 on the negotiations on the EU-Azerbaijan Comprehensive Agreement, its recommendation of 15 November 2017 on the Eastern Partnership and its resolution of 15 June 2017 on the case of journalist Afgan Mukhtarli.

I like to see the release of Mr Huseynov as a positive precursor to resolving this general matter, which in turn would allow for the further deepening of the relations between the EU and Azerbaijan, and for the signing of an ambitious Comprehensive Agreement.”

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