



**Speech by MEP Marina KALJURAND, Chair of the Delegation
for relations with the South Caucasus, at the plenary debate on**

"The case of Dr Gubad Ibadoghlu, imprisoned in Azerbaijan"

Strasbourg, 13 September 2023

Madam President, Commissioner, Colleagues

I join my voice to protest against the brutal arrest and continued detention of Dr Ibadoghlu based on highly dubious charges. I also join my voice to call for the immediate release of Dr Ibadoghlu.

Regrettably, this is not the first time we discuss human rights situation in Azerbaijan.

The European Court of Human Rights stated in 2018 that “there is a troubling pattern of arbitrary arrest and detention of government critics /.../ through misuse of criminal law”.

Unfortunately, today the situation is even worse. There are over 200 political prisoners in Azerbaijan, while many more face ongoing prosecution cases, administrative detentions and harassment by the authorities. That is not acceptable, especially for a country that wants to be a strategic partner of the EU.

Deepening of EU-Azerbaijan relations should be conditional on significant improvement of human rights situation and aligned with the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime.

Thank you!