



United States Mission to the OSCE

**On the Release of Khadija Ismayilova
from Prison in Azerbaijan**

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
May 26, 2016

The United States welcomes the decision of the Azerbaijani Supreme Court to release investigative journalist Khadija Ismayilova on a suspended sentence. We view this as a positive step, and we encourage the Azerbaijani government to drop all remaining charges against her. Protecting freedom of expression and expanding the space for civic and political participation will strengthen Azerbaijan and our bilateral relationship. We look forward to further dialogue on upholding our shared OSCE commitments on freedom of expression and free media.

And we join the EU in thanking the Chairman-in-Office for his statement and the Representative for Freedom of the Media for her statement, and in encouraging Azerbaijan – and all participating States – to make use of the expertise of her office.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.