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**Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan
1184th Meeting of the Permanent Council,
03 May 2018**

*in response to the statements of the Delegation of the European Union
and the United States of America
on World Press Freedom Day*

Mr. Chairperson,

Since a reference was made to my country in the statements of the Delegations of the United States of America and the EU, also on behalf of aligned countries, I would like to stress the following.

We view these statements as reflection of selective approach towards Azerbaijan. The issue referred to in the statement of the EU is a subject to legal consideration of independent judiciary in Azerbaijan. As such, we do not see any ground for raising this matter at the Permanent Council. As a matter of principle, we do not comment on the decisions of Courts in Azerbaijan. We reiterate our call on the Delegations who spoke and aligned to refrain from politicized statements, which are considered as interference with independent legal process.

So-called “independent” web-sites are funded by the US and some EU member-states and the level of their independence is defined with the agenda of those who provide financial assistance. We observe that pressure and measures have been taken by the US and some EU member-states against foreign-funded media outlets.

Decisions taken by Azerbaijan are guided by national security interests in line with national legislation and in full conformity with relevant provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights related to freedom of expression and freedom of the media.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.