



## **Press Release on the case of Mr. Mehman Huseynov**

*Vienna, 07 March 2017*-The Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the OSCE condemns the Press Release issued by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFOM) and the Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) on 6 March 2017.

The Permanent Mission strongly rejects attempts by the OSCE institutions to interfere with the ongoing judicial process regarding the case of Mr. Mehman Huseynov. The Permanent Mission recalls that neither the RFoM, nor the Director of ODIHR is mandated to exercise a juridical function, nor can they in any way prejudice national or international proceedings.

As the case of Mr. Mehman Huseynov is concerned, the Permanent Mission states that the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan filed a petition with the Prosecutor General's Office, following Mr. Huseynov's statements, undermining the reputation of the police, such as allegations about his abduction and illegal restriction of his freedom by the police, as well as his subjection to torture. Having considered the case, Mr. Huseynov was found guilty under Article 147.2 (libel, involving an accusation of a serious crime) of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan and was sentenced to two years in jail by the Surakhani District Court.

Any attempt to politicize the case and link the decision of the Court with professional activities of Mr. Huseynov is groundless and unacceptable.

The Permanent Mission further reiterates that under the national legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan any citizen is entitled to complain about decision of lower Courts and appeal to higher Court instances.

The Permanent Mission expects the RFoM and the Director of ODIHR to strictly abide by their mandates and refrain from any action interfering with the ongoing legal proceedings on the case of Mr. Mehman Huseynov.