



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

STATEMENT ON THE SENTENCING OF KHADIJA ISMAYILOVA

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile
to the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 3 September 2015

Mr Chairman,

In a press statement yesterday, Norway's Foreign Minister Børge Brende said that 'Khadija Ismayilova has reaped international recognition for her critical journalism. Her sentencing increases our concern about the conditions for journalists in Azerbaijan'.

'For many years', the Minister continued, 'Khadija Ismayilova has been highly regarded for her investigative reporting on corruption, abuses of power and human rights violations. She has received a number of international awards, including the 2012 Press Prize jointly awarded by the Fritt Ord Foundation and Zeit-Stiftung.'

'All countries need a free press', the Minister underlined. 'The sentence against Ms Ismayilova is an attempt to silence a critical voice. There is reason to seriously question the grounds for the court case and the manner in which it has been conducted. Once again, we strongly urge Azerbaijan to comply with its obligations to respect fundamental rights and freedoms, and the principles of the rule of law', said Mr Brende.

Thank you, Mr Chairman,