

7 February 2019

**Statement by Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society
Forum on the situation of political prisoners in Azerbaijan**

EaP CSF Steering Committee is concerned that the authorities in Azerbaijan continue to hold over one hundred political prisoners – some of whom, according to reports, have been tortured, while others have started hunger strikes to demand their freedom.

The continued imprisonment of political prisoners in Azerbaijan, while the country is negotiating a strategic partnership with the European Union, undermines the authorities' commitment to human rights and their credibility as a partner of the EU.

Torture of prisoners is inadmissible under any circumstances and we insist for this procedure to be stopped in Azerbaijani prisons, and that those responsible for torture of prisoners be punished. We also call on the EU, and its member states, to consider the imposition of sanctions against those responsible for torture in prisons – in the government, as well as in the prison administration in Azerbaijan.

We urge that all political prisoners in Azerbaijan be released from prison, including Tale Bagirzada, Jabbar Jabbarli and Abbas Huseyn from the Muslim Union Movement – who are currently on hunger strike in protest against their continued detention, as well as Babek Hasanov, Agil Maharramli, Ruslan Nasirli, Saleh Rustamli and Vidadi Rustamli from the Azerbaijani People Front Party. All have reported that they have been tortured while in detention.

***Members of the Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society
Forum***