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Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 16th Session

Universal Periodic Review of Azerbaijan

Statement by Australia

Australia commends Azerbaijan's continued engagement with the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process, and welcomes new laws on education, domestic violence and the rights and freedoms of detained persons. Australia also recognises the steps Azerbaijan has taken in implementing a legislative framework against corruption and organised crime.

Australia encourages Azerbaijan's continued engagement with international human rights bodies and with European institutions including the Council of Europe and the OSCE. Australia notes that, since the previous UPR, Azerbaijan has acceded to treaties that contribute to the protection and promotion of human rights, including measures against trafficking in human beings, the diversity of cultural expression and equal opportunity in the workforce. **Australia recommends Azerbaijan ensure that obligations regarding freedom of assembly and freedom of expression, to which Azerbaijan committed on becoming a member of the Council of Europe, are implemented consistently and transparently.**

It is important that the upcoming elections in October 2013 meet Azerbaijan's commitment to democratic standards. **Australia recommends Azerbaijan carry out free and fair elections consistent with the expectations of the international election monitoring community.**

Australia is deeply concerned by reports of intimidation against civil society organisations including through the suppression of peaceful demonstrations and the detention of journalists, human rights defenders and opposition figures. **Australia recommends that Azerbaijan ensure that due legal process, including transparency during police investigations, is afforded to all, including those critical of the government.**

Sadia Stathis