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AZERBAIJAN

Mister President,

The Republic of Cyprus would like to welcome Azerbaijan's participation in the 2nd cycle of the UPR Working Group and thank [head of delegation] for the presentation of the National Report.

My delegation wishes to take this opportunity to commend the Government of Azerbaijan for the recommendations that it has implemented from its first UPR-cycle in 2009. Further, Cyprus wishes to note the fact that in the last few years Azerbaijan has acceded to a number of international treaties which contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights, such as the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, the Convention of the Council of Europe on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, and others.

At the same time, we are concerned at reports by international human rights organisations of a recent deterioration of the situation of human rights in Azerbaijan. We would, therefore, urge the Azerbaijani Government to take effective steps and ensure greater respect for human rights, on issues like freedom of assembly and association and freedom of opinion.

We also urge closer attention be paid to the right of freedom of expression, including the right of journalists, independent media outlets and people using the social media to express their opinion.

We, therefore, recommend:

1. Put in place additional and fitting measures to ensure respect for freedom of expression and of the media.
2. Ensure that Azerbaijani media regulations uphold diversity among media outlets as per international standards and best practices.

I thank you Mister President.