

## STATEMENT ON ILGAR MAMMADOV PRISON SENTENCE

Strasbourg 19.03.2014:

The European Association of Schools of Political Studies of the Council of Europe (EASPS) which groups the Directors of Schools in 19 countries today condemned in the strongest possible terms the 7 year prison sentence of their Azeri colleague Ilgar Mammadov, Director of the Baku School.

Ilgar Mammadov, who heads the opposition REAL Movement in Azerbaijan and Musavat Party Deputy Chair, Tofiq Yagublu, have been detained on trumped up charges since February 2013.

According to the US embassy in Baku which observed the "trial" «the verdicts were not based on the evidence and were politically motivated».

The spurious charges brought against Mr Mammadov, one of Azerbaijan's leading advocates for genuine democracy, are clearly aimed at silencing him through judicial harassment.

This travesty of justice is in flagrant violation of Azerbaijan's commitments and obligations as a member state of the Council of Europe and a signatory of the European Convention on Human Rights. It comes just weeks before Azerbaijan is scheduled to take over the Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Strasbourg-based Organisation.

The EASPS, whose President is former French Minister Catherine Lalumière calls on the Council of Europe and the European Union to stand up for Human Rights and Democracy and demand the immediate and unconditional release of Ilgar Mammadov, Tofiq Yagublu and other political prisoners held in Azeri gaols.

**Catherine Lalumière**

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