

**ATƏT YANINDA
AZƏRBAYCAN RESPUBLİKASININ
DAİMİ NÜMAYƏNDƏLİYİ**



**PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN
TO THE OSCE**

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Statement at the 812th meeting of the Permanent Council
June 10, 2010

In response to the EU statement on Azerbaijan

Mr. Chairperson,

Right to freedom of assembly is regulated with the relevant law of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The law as amended in 2008 has passed legal expertise of the Venice Commission and ODIHR and has been positively assessed by the mentioned organizations.

In accordance with the law, a person or organization intending to conduct any assembly enumerated in this law has to inform relevant body of executive power in written. I would like to inform that, in the case, mentioned in the statement of distinguished delegation of Spain also in the name of EU, Azadlig bloc did inform Baku City Executive Authority (BCEA) of its intention and offered sites convenient for the bloc. However, due to numerous public safety reasons, BCEA had to suggest other sites for demonstration, which as it turns out didn't satisfy the bloc and thus the assembly was unsanctioned for that specific site. As a result, the law-enforcement had to fulfill their duties in securing public safety by not allowing unsanctioned demonstration to take place.

Let me underline that suggested sites for such kind of assemblies are the same for both ruling and opposition parties. Insisting on holding rallies or demonstrations in the very centre of Baku is useless taking into account the specific features of infrastructure of the city, reconstruction activities, road construction and other measures being undertaken by the Government aimed at eliminating traffic jams.

Unfortunately, Azerbaijani people have witnessed in their not very far history periods of unsanctioned gatherings and chaotic mass disturbances. In order not to allow the history to repeat, the Government and law-enforcement agencies do all their best to preserve stability in the country. It is not a secret that Azerbaijan's rapid socio-economic development and political stability are

not in the interests of certain forces. In this regard, it should be noted that any attempts to undermine public security and political stability in the country will be duly dealt with by the law-enforcement agencies in accordance with the national legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Regarding access to mass media, we have informed on numerous occasions about the functioning of mass media outlets in our country. Let me only repeat that Government does its utmost in order to provide all conditions for media outlets free and independent functioning. The State Support Fund for the Development of Media has become fully operational and contributes to the improvement of overall situation in this field in the country. As for the problems, I put on the first place low level of professionalism of journalists. So, instead of criticism for the sake of criticism approach, I call upon our partners to propose concrete goal-oriented projects in this field.

And concerning equal access to mass media during an election campaign, the Electoral Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan which has received legal expertise and positive reaction from the Council of Europe Venice Commission includes 12 articles particularly dedicated to the role of mass media and regulations of access to media in the run-up to elections. Hence the electoral process is regulated in accordance with the above-mentioned Code, equal access to free and paid air time will be duly regulated within that legislative framework.

All above-mentioned indicates that there are no problems with access to mass media in Azerbaijan. We do appreciate the interest by the Spanish delegation on behalf of the European Union to this issue in our country, however, we see no reason for raising the same issues repeatedly, which don't represent added value to the work of our Organization and in particular, in the format of the Permanent Council.

At the end, let me once again to underline that the Republic of Azerbaijan fulfils all its commitments within the international law and expects full understanding and respect from the international community and our partners in this regard.

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson.