

**Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan**

**Monday, 29 September 2014**

**Working session 10 (specifically selected topic):  
Rights of Persons belonging to national minorities,  
Including address by the OSCE High Commissioner on  
National Minorities**

**Delivered by prof. Dr. Etibar Najafov, Head Adviser  
Service of the State Counsellor of the Republic of Azerbaijan  
For Multiculturalism, Interethnic and Religious Affairs**

Thank you Madam Moderator,

Azerbaijan has been historically a tolerant state. It has been a multiethnic state in which rights of persons belonging to national minorities were respected by the state. Representatives of national minority groups have never been discriminated by the representatives of the titular nation.

In the Declaration of Independence of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic which was established on May 28, 1918 and which was the first democratic state in all Muslim world, we read: "Azerbaijan Democratic Republic guarantees the compliances of political rights of all citizens not depending on their ethnic, religious, gender identity and social positions". As an evidence of this non-discrimination policy of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic we can note the fact that among the ministers of the government were representatives of Russian, Jewish, Armenian and other national minority groups.

During the Soviet period Azerbaijan lost its independence. However, the Azerbaijani people preserved and developed their historical traditions of tolerance and non-discrimination attitude toward national minorities.

The restoration of the political independence of Azerbaijan on October 18, 1991 created favorable conditions for conducting independent national policy based on development of the policy of tolerance.

The principle of tolerance finds its expression in the following articles of the Constitution of Azerbaijan Republic: Article 15 "Equality right", Article 44 "National identification right", and Article 45 "Mother tongue right".

The main aim of the national policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan is to preserve cultural-ethnic values of all nations and to strengthen their unity. The national policy of the state rejects assimilationist and isolationist policy. It is based on multiculturalism, which was officially declared by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan as a state policy. It was declared in the situation when some Western European states refused from it.

Azerbaijan is well known for its multiculturalism policy in the contemporary world. This policy has some specific features which allow us to talk about the Azerbaijani model of multiculturalism. One of the most important features of the Azerbaijani model of multiculturalism is that the state has been actively involved into conducting this policy. The state support of multiculturalism prevents possible disintegration processes which may lead to different kinds of separatism, conflicts, and wars. However, the state's involvement into conducting multiculturalism policy is being done within the frameworks of the norms of democratic society.

Among most important evidences of the state adherence to multiculturalism policy I'd like to note the establishment of the Service of the State Counsellor of the Republic of Azerbaijan for Multiculturalism, Interethnic and Religious affairs by the Decree of the President from February 28, 2014 and the establishment of Baku International Multiculturalism Center by the Decree of the President from May 15, 2014. Furthermore, since 2011 the Republic of Azerbaijan hosts each year Baku Humanitarian Forum in which multiculturalism session is one of the main sessions.

Thank you.