

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 967th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

17 October 2013

Regarding the presidential elections in Azerbaijan

Mr. Chairperson,

I should also like to express a few thoughts on the presidential elections in Azerbaijan, which took place on 9 October.

A considerable number of international experts and representatives of a wide range of international organizations took part in the observation of the election campaign and voting. Among them was a large mission from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) comprising 276 persons including 20 long-term observers. The head of the mission concluded that the elections were free and democratic and guaranteed the right to free expression of will. The results fully reflected the mood of the people. The minor irregularities mentioned by observers, including those of the CIS mission, had no bearing whatsoever on the election process and, above all, on the result. Similar conclusions were also drawn by a number of other international observer missions, including those of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) and the European Parliament.

The President of the Russian Federation congratulated the President of Azerbaijan on his election victory and noted that it bore witness to his high political authority and the active support by the population of Azerbaijan for the course undertaken by him for the socio-economic development of the country and the consolidation of its international positions.

I should like to mention the positive and balanced statement made by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Mr. Leonid Kozhara.

In this context, we note that the negative conclusions by the joint monitoring mission of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly are in striking contrast to the positive opinions of the missions of the CIS, European Parliament and PACE as well as a whole series of other international observers. We have also drawn attention to the statements made by the members of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly taking part in the election monitoring, which are at odds with the

ODIHR conclusions as well. Within the short-term mission was a large group of Russian observers, and we therefore have a clear picture of what the real situation was.

Such a marked difference of opinions really compromises the ODIHR mission, as the ambassador of Azerbaijan has pointed out, and casts doubt on its reputation as the “gold standard” in the field of election monitoring. Once again the question is raised as to the transparency of the accounts and the authenticity of the information used, not to mention the Office’s traditional geographical and numerical bias.

The divergence of opinions highlighted in the elections in Azerbaijan clearly shows that the time has come for all organizations participating in the observation of elections to sit down together at a table and work out uniform, clearly understandable, transparent and universally applicable rules and principles for the monitoring of elections.

We trust that this topic will be given serious consideration at the seminar in Vienna on 31 October and 1 November, which will include discussion of the “Review of electoral legislation and practice in OSCE participating States”, which was published yesterday, and urge all delegations to make an active contribution to it.

Thank you for your attention.