



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT BY NORWAY IN RESPONSE TO THE
PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION IN AZERBAIJAN
OSCE Permanent Council, Vienna
10 November 2005**

Mr. Chairman,

Norway has followed the political developments in Azerbaijan with great interest and we have harboured great hopes that the parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan would meet OSCE criteria for free and fair elections. Throughout the pre-election period, positive steps were made and one saw signs of willingness from State authorities to improve the overall electoral process, particularly expressed through the last two presidential decrees.

However, these reforms were only partially implemented. The elections suffered from serious shortcomings, both in the pre-election period and on Election Day. It is therefore with regret we note that the elections did not meet a number of international standards and democratic principles.

Norway urges the Azerbaijani authorities to follow up the Presidential decree of 25 October and duly process all complaints and prosecute officials who are found to have hampered a free and fair electoral process. We welcome the decision of the Central Election Commission to annul the results in two constituencies and the recount of the ballots in one constituency.

Still, there are many other constituencies where the electoral process may be questioned. We therefore urge that allegations are investigated fully and that appropriate action is taken. Norway also appeals to all parties that they continue to draw on existing legal frameworks to find solutions in a non-violent way. We note with satisfaction that the opposition has chosen to demonstrate its dissatisfaction in a peaceful manner. It is important that State authorities respect the freedom of assembly and expression and allow for a more balanced media coverage.

Finally Chairman, we call on the Azerbaijani Government to work closely with OSCE/ODIHR in the follow-up of its recommendations to improve the overall electoral process.

Thank you.