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Delegation of Uzbekistan

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE
REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN AT THE MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

12 November 2009

**In response to the statement by the European Union on the forthcoming
parliamentary elections in Uzbekistan scheduled for December 2009**

Madam Chairperson,

The Uzbek side has also familiarized itself with the report by the OSCE/ODIHR Needs Assessment Mission based on the results of its visit to Uzbekistan and concerned with the preparations for the elections to the legislative chamber of the *Oliy Majlis*, the *Jogorku Kenesh* of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, and the regional, district and city *Kengashes* of People's Deputies. These elections are due to be held on 27 December of this year.

We understand the concern expressed by the European Union, but we should, nevertheless, like to make the following comments.

During the visit to Uzbekistan, the Needs Assessment Mission held meetings with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Central Election Commission (CEC), the National Television and Radio Company and also with representatives of political parties and civil society, during which it received exhaustive answers to its questions.

In particular, detailed information was provided by the senior officials of the CEC on the plan for the Commission's work in preparing and holding the elections, the deadlines for the registration of candidates, the establishment of electoral districts and polling stations, the formation of election commissions, voter lists, etc. It was noted that so far amendments have been made to 13 statutory instruments on election issues, and a number of recommendations made by the OSCE as regards improving the electoral process on the basis of the results of the 2004 and 2007 elections have been taken into account in the preparations for the current parliamentary elections.

As the representatives of the political parties taking part in the forthcoming elections noted, equal conditions are being created for campaigning by political parties, voters' initiative groups and all candidates, monitoring is under way to ensure that these conditions are met and that all parties have equal access to the media during the election campaign.

According to the National Television and Radio Company, public access to the Internet in the country has increased ten-fold since the 2004 parliamentary elections. All institutions of higher education in Uzbekistan are hooked up to the world wide web and this year all schools will be too.

And you say that you do not see any improvements. It may be true that most of the recommendations have not been implemented yet, but we are working on that and are ready for constructive co-operation with the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

I should like to take this opportunity to inform you that the CEC has adopted a decision on the access of the People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan, the Social Democratic Party *Adolat*, the Movement of Entrepreneurs and Businessmen – the Liberal Democratic Party of Uzbekistan, and the Democratic Party *Milly Tiklanish* to the forthcoming elections to the legislative and representative authorities.

This fact once again means that during the forthcoming election campaign one of the main principles of elections will be ensured – the principle of a multi-party system providing the electorate with a broad and real choice in exercising their constitutional right.

Uzbekistan is gradually reaching a qualitatively new level of political development, where parties are becoming an advanced tool for ensuring democratic processes and a means of increasing the people's participation in governing society and the State.

We should like to stress once more that the invitation extended to the ODIHR to monitor the forthcoming elections is a demonstration of the openness of the electoral process in Uzbekistan and of the readiness of the Uzbek side to engage in constructive collaboration with the OSCE.

We too express our condolences to Dilmurod Saiid on the tragic death of his wife and daughter in a road traffic accident.

Thank you for your attention.