

European Center for Artsakh e.V.

On Democratic Elections in the Nagorno Karabakh Republic

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I represent the European Center for Artsakh NGO from Germany, Berlin. One of the aspects of our work is raising awareness about the Nagorno Karabakh Republic in Europe.

I would like to draw your attention to the democratic elections as a means of self-organization of the civil society and formation of democratic authorities in de-facto independent states, on the example of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic.

The isolation of the people of such states from international co-operation leaves them with no other choice than relying on their own resources. I believe that the unrecognized status should not serve a reason to oust these people from international cooperation, particularly when it comes to protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Attempts to impose restrictions on the activities of international and regional organizations in those parts of the OSCE is an obvious application of collective punishment against that people and should be unacceptable for the OSCE area.

Despite all these obstacles the democratic processes have been more successful and sustainable in Nagorno Karabakh than in some OSCE participating states whose poor human rights record often comes to the scrutiny in this meeting as well. The vivid manifestation of this is the fact that authorities in Nagorno Karabakh have been formed exclusively through democratic elections. Since the declaration of its independence in 1991, 5 presidential, 5 parliamentary, and a number of elections to the local-self government bodies have been held in the Republic. All of them were observed by international observers that assessed them as free, fair and transparent. The power Nagorno-Karabakh cannot be inherited within one family or prolonged into unlimited electoral terms.

I would like to add here, that the first ever municipal elections in the South Caucasus were held in Karabakh back in 1998. That shows how deeply the democratic processes are rooted in the political life of this country and they emanate from the realization of the rights of self-determination as a cornerstone of human rights and fundamental freedoms. It is worth mentioning that the next parliamentary elections are scheduled for May, 2014 and civil society of Nagorno-Karabakh will appreciate guidance of the OSCE institutions in this regard.

To conclude, I would like to recommend:

- to the ODIHR to co-operate with non-governmental organizations throughout the entire OSCE area, regardless of the status of the country and engage in best practices exchange on elections and election monitoring.

Thank you very much for your attention!

Harutyun Grigoryan LL.M.

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