

HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING
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Working session 1

Work done in the field of human rights protection in Azerbaijan
and activities of the Ombudsman

Mr. Moderator
Ladies and gentlemen

As every year, in the current year, the complex measures have been undertaken by the state bodies responsible for the implementation of the National Program for Action to Raise the Effectiveness of the protection of human rights and freedoms in the Republic of Azerbaijan, the work has been carried out for more effective protection of human rights, civil society institutions have been involved in this process and joint measures have been taken.

As it is known, the right to election is one of the basic constitutional rights of citizens, expressing direct influence on the organization of state bodies.

I would like to mention that, on the eve of the presidential elections held this year, wide-ranging awareness-raising activities were carried out with the participation of the CEC, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ombudsman, in the capital and in regions, with involvement of the staff of the chairs of the Constituency Election Commissions, the police departments and departments of the cities and regions. International observers and NGO representatives also attended the event.

Within the framework of the implemented activities, a number of Constituency Election Commissions and polling stations buildings, meeting rooms were visited, the process of preparation for the election was observed, open places in wide squares and stadiums, and closed spaces in large halls provided with the necessary conditions allocated for mass events and meetings during the pre-election promotional campaigns were visited as well.

According to the results of the observation at places there were determined the organization of the elections at the highest level, that the voter lists are hanging in the visible place, that the CEC is widely distributed and provided various documents, educational publications, manuals, relevant memory leaves and posters for the exercise of election rights, as well as that equal opportunities for the presidential candidates had been ensured.

On the Election Day, taking into account the positive experiences of the past years, independently, by registering on their own initiative, the Commissioner for

Human Rights, as well as 38 staff members representing the Central Office of the Ombudsman, also regional centers, as observers they observed voting processes in 371 election stations in 103 constituencies in 53 cities and districts of Baku and of the country, including refugees and internally displaced persons settlements, military units, penitentiary institutions.

As a result of our observations we would like to note that the Presidential elections were held in the conditions of a high level of the participation of the population and according to the electoral legislation and international standards.

I would like to mention that the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan signed the Order “On Additional Measures for the Advancement of Advocacy in the Republic of Azerbaijan” on February 22, 2018.

The order includes, in particular, such recommendations, as: creation of conditions for the admission of new members, especially young lawyers, to the Bar Association through the systematic organisation of entrance examinations; ensuring strict adherence by lawyers to the rule of law, the principles of justice and high professional standards, including the requirement to preserve the confidentiality of information they have received, good and courteous treatment of persons seeking legal assistance; organisation of providing free legal services for low-income people in need of legal advice and others.

The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan signed an Order “On pardoning a number of persons convicted on the occasion of the centenary of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic” on May 24, 2018.

This is an Order of Pardoning that covered more convicted among the orders of pardoning signed so far.

The order of pardoning was extended to 634 people 39 of which were foreigners. The order of pardoning once again demonstrated the commitment of the Azerbaijani state to the principles of mercy and humanism.

In order to protect the rights and freedoms of persons with disabilities, the government of Azerbaijan has realized continuous measures, Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled was ratified by the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan of 12 June, 2018.

The Marrakesh Treaty provides blind and visually impaired people that they can freely use the works for their benefit without infringing their copyrights.

On June 20-21, 2018, the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Republic of Azerbaijan, with the support of the National Commission of the Republic of Azerbaijan for UNESCO, traditionally held XV Baku International Conference of Ombudsmen, on the topic “The Role of national human rights institutions in ensuring and promoting legal equality”. The conference was dedicated to the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan has successfully completed the Twinning project with the joint participation of Germany and Poland within the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument.

The Twinning project “Supporting the Capacity Building of the Ombudsman of the Republic of Azerbaijan” lasted for 24 months, covering February 2016 and February 2018, covered four components.

In total, 70 expert missions were realized with involvement of 45 international experts from six EU countries; the Ombudsman of the Republic of Azerbaijan provided organizational support to ensure effective activity in this regard, the missions covered each of four components of the project.

As a result, the experts highly appreciated the conducted activity and achieved positive experience of the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the field of protection of human rights and freedoms in line with the Paris Principles and stated that the Twinning project was important for improving the work of both sides.

At the initiative of the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan, a Working Group on Business and Human Rights has been established under the Ombudsman, consisting of representatives of relevant governmental bodies and NGOs. Sixteen round tables have been organized on various topical issues so far within the framework of the Group’s activities; a set of proposals was submitted to the Milli Mejlis and relevant governmental bodies on the basis of the analysis of the opinions during the discussions and of the legislation.

A series of trainings were held in Baku in July 2018, on the topic “Increasing the knowledge and skills in the field of monitoring, evaluation and accountability of civil society representatives and lawyers through the use of UN Human Rights Mechanisms” jointly organized by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Bar Association.

The trainings include the following topics: “UN Human Rights Mechanisms”, “United Nations Basic Human Rights Treaties and Treaty Organizations”, “National Mechanisms for Working with UN Human Rights Mechanisms”, “Final Commitments of UN Committees, the opportunities for civil society in promoting international human rights in Treaty Bodies” wide exchange of opinions were carried out as well.

Representatives of non-governmental organizations, barristers and lawyers were involved in the trainings.

Thank you for attention!