

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ANVAR AZIMOV,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

11 November 2010

Regarding the results of the parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan

Mr. Chairperson,

We have carefully studied the preliminary assessments of the international observers who monitored the parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan held on 7 November. One of the most numerous monitoring groups was the mission dispatched by the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), which included representatives from the majority of the CIS member States.

In the unanimous opinion of that mission, the elections had taken place in a democratic and transparent manner and, most importantly, in full conformity with Azerbaijani legislation. It was also noted that the authorities had taken all the necessary measures to ensure a representative vote. The observers from the CIS countries identified a number of shortcomings, but these were minimal and had no effect on how the citizens of Azerbaijan voted. The CIS mission did not receive any serious complaints or comments either from the voters, the election commissions, or the local observers. The official statement by the CIS mission, reflecting the opinion of all its participants, will be published following the announcement of the official results of the voting and will be distributed within the OSCE.

These totally reliable and objective conclusions are in contrast with the findings of the mission dispatched by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the observers from the Parliamentary Assemblies of the OSCE and of the Council of Europe, and also the monitors from the European Parliament. At the same time, there are obvious inconsistencies in the document circulated by those organizations. For example, at 90 per cent of the polling stations monitored the voting procedure received a positive assessment, but for some reason the summary statement claims that on the whole the election campaign supposedly failed to show progress in the democratic development of the country.

Also puzzling are the statements by Ms. Audrey Glover, the head of the ODIHR mission, regarding an alleged absence of the necessary conditions for the organization of free elections and serious violations on election day itself, even though the mission's conclusions speak of the serious and active work of the Central Election Commission of Azerbaijan and

also of a voting atmosphere free of conflict. There is no way of reconciling, on the one hand, the conclusions regarding a “domination of public and political life by one party” and, on the other, the statement to the effect that “all political parties participated in the elections”.

At this point, a legitimate question arises: to what extent were the opinions of many short-term observers, including those from the Russian Federation, taken into account when formulating these conclusions, which to a considerable degree repeat the critical assessments of the preceding interim reports of the ODIHR mission, as drafted by experts from its “core team”? All of these factors once again convincingly demonstrate the need for substantial corrections in the methodology and practices employed by the ODIHR.

Frankly speaking, we are unable to agree with the view of certain OSCE participating States that the “parliamentary elections were not held in accordance with international standards”. As you are aware, up to now no uniform election monitoring rules have been drawn up within the OSCE. Accordingly, we would once again propose that, before expressing criticisms of this kind, a document setting out the principles of international monitoring and the status of international observers should be collectively drafted.

Thank you for your attention.