



STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

Election Observation and Follow-up of Recommendations 2 November, 2016

Session 1: OSCE commitments. International obligations and other standards for democratic elections

Thank you Mr. Moderator,

I would like to thank distinguished guest speakers for their valuable contributions. I also thank the ODIHR and Chairmanship for organizing this meeting on the topic, which has been subject of heated debate for quite some time.

OSCE participating States have committed to build democratic societies based on free and fair elections. Since Copenhagen we have collectively developed set of election-related commitments. Implementation of these commitments is the responsibility of national authorities, while the OSCE, most notably its Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, has important role to assist them. We have tasked the OSCE/ODIHR to act in an advisory capacity, in close consultation with the Chairman-in-Office, participate in discussions of the Permanent Council, report at regular intervals on its activities and provide information on implementation issues.

We, as the participating States, have tasked the ODIHR to develop a methodology that would allow independent, impartial and professional assessment of elections held in participating States. For that aim, we have agreed that improvements and recommendations concerning election related activities, including with regard to further strengthening the observation methodology and assistance programmes should have been put into practice by the ODIHR and submitted to the Permanent Council for its review. Since 2006 this is an outstanding task that yet to be fulfilled by ODIHR.

An election observation methodology that causes a number of questions of OSCE participating States is a serious problem and we have to address it without further delay. The OSCE/ODIHR is yet to fulfill its task given by the 2006 Ministerial Council to submit its recommendations on strengthening of the election observation methodology to Permanent Council's review. Until that takes place, the methodology that ODIHR applies will continue to be highly politicized matter being subject of serious controversy. Further continuation of this situation is not in the interest of the OSCE, since it undermines trust and confidence within the Organization.

We regret over lack of constructive engagement by some delegations over the proposal for draft decision put forward by the Delegation of Azerbaijan last year. We remain to be of the strong view that dialogue and engagement by all is at the core of OSCE, if we all bear sincere interest in making ODIHR more efficient and effective.

We invite the participating States to engage in serious OSCE-wide discussion on review and improvement of ODIHR's election observation methodology. Azerbaijan remains open for further consultations with participating States and ODIHR.

Thank you Mr. Moderator