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### Press Release

## **Declining the invitation to observe the parliamentary election in Azerbaijan is a serious violation by the Director of ODIHR of its mandate**

The Permanent Mission of Azerbaijan to the OSCE is concerned with the decision taken by the Director of OSCE/ODIHR to cancel the Election Observation Mission for the upcoming parliamentary election in Azerbaijan to be held on November 1, 2015. The Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan, honoring its OSCE commitments, extended an invitation to the OSCE/ODIHR to observe the election. Following the Needs Assessment Mission (NAM) report, the Azerbaijani side communicated in writing substantive concerns over the findings and recommendations of the NAM and questioned the validity of the OSCE/ODIHR election observation methodology, in particular the number of the long-term and short-term observers recommended by NAM.

Taking into account elections practice in wide OSCE area and ratio of LTOs and STOs to the size of population and electorate, the Government of Azerbaijan suggested the OSCE/ODIHR revising its NAM report. Unfortunately, the OSCE/ODIHR refused to deal with the concerns of Azerbaijan and rejected the proposal to engage in consultations on its debatable recommendations.

Failure by the OSCE/ODIHR to address the shortcomings communicated by Azerbaijan and attempt to impose questionable recommendations of the NAM is not only an attempt to infringe upon sovereign rights of an OSCE participating State, but also is contrary to the spirit of the OSCE, which stands for dialogue and cooperation.

Declining the invitation to observe the parliamentary election is a serious violation by the Director of ODIHR of the mandate entrusted to him.

The fact that the decision of the OSCE/ODIHR came right after the relevant resolution of European Parliament on Azerbaijan, which called for refraining from observation of our parliamentary election, adds to the doubts of ODIHR's independence, integrity and professionalism.

In light of the above-mentioned and being compelled by the steps taken by OSCE/ODIHR, the Azerbaijani authorities will hold the Director Link accountable at the OSCE for the ignorance to the concerns of the OSCE participating State and violation of the mandate by refusing to assist the OSCE participating State in implementing its election-related commitments. The people of Azerbaijan, with or without the OSCE/ODIHR election observation, will have a chance to express their will in a free and fair election.