



## **Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan**

### ***1073<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Permanent Council,***

***29 October 2015***

*in response to the report of the Director of ODIHR on HDIM*

### **Right of Reply**

Thank you Mr. Chairperson,

I also wanted to dwell further upon some thoughts and ideas discussed with regard to the report HDIM.

I have heard that some Delegations were a bit sensitive to the criticism that might be applied against the ODIHR. They see it as a challenge to its independence or impartiality. I would encourage them to look at it positively. If you think that ODIHR is immune from mistakes then this is not the case. We see those mistakes. Attaching the immunity to the ODIHR, first of all is detrimental to this organization. So I hope that the Director Link do not take such statements seriously. We are for the criticism, but substantiated, which is based on arguments, that is not unhealthy and not made for the finger pointing exercise, if the term shame and blame is not applicable in this hall.

We encourage the Director Link to be receptive to the criticism and to look for the ways to respond to this criticism. The specific situation indicates that it is not ideal and perfect. There are disagreements. In case one denies those disagreements, as a source or reason for discussions of that criticism that would further widen the gap between the Delegations and between the countries. I think that is not helpful for the OSCE.

Secondly, I thank the Ambassador of the United States for his response. I am very pleased to see that his Government indeed has engaged in a certain areas of improvement and discussions on human rights concern that are still valid. I have

raised the specific questions related to the Guantanamo and also encourage the Director of ODIHR and other executive structures to look more into the details at every instance of the violation of human rights in that area, investigate them and bring the results to the Permanent Council. We have to be objective to every case of violations.

As for the reference on the personal attacks on the distinguished Ambassador of the United States at HDIM, this may be stemming from the fact that there were some additional innovations applied during this HDIM meeting, such as online twitter screens which were accessible to everyone in the room may form in him the impression that they were connected to the Delegation of Azerbaijan, but this is not the case. I wish to assure him that the Vienna Delegation of Azerbaijan is not attending the HDIM already for some time, like 5 or 6 years. Because, we see the problems in that event, and our attempts to improve it so far failed. We hope these discussions would stimulate the reforms of HDIM.

Finally to the comments made by the distinguished Ambassador of Armenia, I am impressed by his knowledge of the situation with civil society in Azerbaijan. Perhaps you could also refer to the cases of the escape of the civil rights activist of Armenian NGO to Azerbaijan seeking refuge in Azerbaijan because of the actions of the Armenian authorities. Then I would take his intervention sincerely, but now I see it only in a propagandistic way. The reason is that I have touched upon a very specific issue of participation of NGO which represents the separatist regime, its statements and purposes. I should mention that this organization is not from the separatist regime, it was established in one of the participating States, but its presence at HDIM undermines the principles this Organization stands for and also the trust between our countries.

I would like to hear the response of the Director Link, given his previous responses that he has very limited procedural tool box to prevent such NGOs from participation. I also would like to encourage him to dwell upon how you could improve the organizational methodology to prevent abuse of HDIM events by separatist.

Thank you.