



Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan

1073rd Meeting of the Permanent Council,

29 October 2015

violation by the OSCE/ODIHR of its mandate

Mr. Chairperson,

As a follow up to previous discussions, the Delegation of Azerbaijan would like to inform the Permanent Council on the current situation emerged as a result of violation by the Director of the OSCE/ODIHR of his mandate.

Over the last two weeks the Azerbaijani side engaged in consultations with the ODIHR to find a way out of current unfortunate situation emerged due to cancellation by the Director of ODIHR of observation mission for parliamentary election in Azerbaijan to be held on November 1.

Since Director Link repeatedly indicated to us that deployment of full-fledged election observation mission might not be possible at this stage, the Azerbaijani side expressed its readiness to consider other forms of ODIHR's engagement with the upcoming parliamentary election that would correspond to the standing invitation of the Government of Azerbaijan. On the 16th of October meeting with Director Link and his representative in Vienna we agreed to consider a deployment of the ODIHR expert team to Azerbaijan. According to this option, which is foreseen in the ODIHR's handbook on elections as possible form of the ODIHR election related assistance, the ODIHR experts should have been stationed in our country on the eve of elections, on the elections day and after elections. At this meeting the ODIHR Director promised to us to consult with his ODIHR experts and then to communicate in the next day or two the form of activity and number of experts, which will be deployed to Azerbaijan.

On October 21st afternoon, surprisingly for our Delegation, the ODIHR Representative in Vienna, in presence of the Serbian and German Delegations, informed our side that the ODIHR experts cannot be in Azerbaijan before the election takes place and suggested to organize their visit only after elections. No substantiated argument in favor of declining the requested election-related assistance was provided. In the meantime, one hour later after the meeting the OSCE Delegations in Vienna received the PA OSCE news release informing them that the Director Link jointly with OSCE PA and European Parliament made a public announcement in New York that all three institutions will not observe elections in Azerbaijan on November 1.

The Delegation of Azerbaijan considers such a non-constructive attitude by the Director of ODIHR as unacceptable. On one hand, he demonstrates engagement in consultations with the Azerbaijani side, and, on the other, in New York, he makes public announcement with third parties about elections in Azerbaijan without any prior notifications to the OSCE participating State whom he was consulting with. Such an attitude is detrimental to the spirit of cooperation and trust that the OSCE is based upon and further convinces our Delegation that the Director of ODIHR is not interested in finding the way out of the situation he created.

Despite such a disrespectful attitude displayed by the ODIHR, at the last Council meeting on October 22, the Delegation of Azerbaijan expressed its hope that the Director of ODIHR will reconsider his position and re-engage in good faith in consultations to find a way out of the situation until the elections held.

Last weekend we consulted again with the ODIHR and suggested them considering a deployment of a limited number of ODIHR experts to render a specific form of election related assistance to the Azerbaijani authorities on the eve of elections and on November 1, election day. Regretfully, ODIHR once again refused to the request of the Azerbaijani side to provide assistance in upcoming election.

Mr. Chairperson,

From the very first days of our engagement with newly appointed Director of the ODIHR we pinned our hopes on opportunities for restoring trust and cooperation with this institution, which were damaged by his predecessor. Our approach to the ODIHR has always been constructive and cooperative. Almost on every stage of our interaction with the ODIHR in the aftermath of the Director Link decision to

cancel election observation mission we have kept the Permanent Council informed about the process and encouraged ODIHR to engage in good faith in consultations.

This is the final attempt of the Delegation of Azerbaijan to flag the unacceptable policy pursued by the OSCE Institution against the OSCE participating State. The Azerbaijani side reiterates that if the assistance requested by the Azerbaijani Government in accordance with the OSCE decisions and based on the ODIHR mandate is not rendered on the election day, the Delegation of Azerbaijan will reconsider relevance of the ODIHR for OSCE.

Azerbaijan truly believes that the OSCE institutions and field missions should be seen as our common assets, but not as a leverage to pursue narrow interests. They must function for the interests of all OSCE participating States, but not based on preferences of some states, harming interests of others. Head of the OSCE institutions have to strictly follow their mandates. We reserve our right to come back to this agenda item at a later stage.

Thank you.