



**ANALYSIS OF THE ACTIVITY OF INTERNATIONAL MONITORING MISSIONS
PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS
NOVEMBER 1, 2015
REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN**

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I. INTRODUCTION

When discussing the international monitoring missions and parliamentary delegations that observed the parliamentary elections to Milli Majlis in Azerbaijan, it is worth noting that the full list of such missions, as well as information about their quantitative and qualitative configuration, is not available on the website of Azerbaijan's Central Election Commission (CEC). For this reason, this monitoring was based on available and accessible data (media: newspapers, websites, and television), as well as data collected via interviews with observers and representatives of the organizations and delegations that conducted the monitoring.

The observation missions were monitored and evaluated in accordance with the principles and standards of international elections observation, expressed in the Declaration of Principles for Election Observation adopted by the United Nations on October 27, 2005. This Declaration was signed by prominent international organizations that observe elections in countries around the world.

It is important to mention that, according to Articles 44.2 and 44.3 of the Election Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan, monitoring organizations must receive an invitation either from CEC or the Parliament of Azerbaijan to send elections observers to the country. This allows us to infer that CEC and the Parliament are familiar with the track record, experience, and observation methods of the organizations they invite for elections monitoring. International observers can be accredited by CEC only by an official invitation from the Central Election Commission.

According to the Head of Azerbaijan's CEC, Mazahir Panakhov, as of October 31, 2015, 503 international observers (representing 27 countries and 40 organizations) were accredited by CEC (<http://1news.az/politics/20151031040442499.html>) to observe the parliamentary elections. Interestingly, two days earlier, on October 29, CEC reported that there would be 501 international observers (<http://www.1news.az/politics/20151029074511388.html>), and on October 27, Panakhov stated that the monitoring would be conducted by 465 observers from 36 international organizations (<http://www.trend.az/azerbaijan/election2015/2448142.html>).

In the general list of international monitoring organizations reported by CEC, there were delegations from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-Speaking Countries (Turk PA), the Parliamentary Assembly of Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PA BSEC), and the parliaments of Australia, Italy, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Latvia, and the House of Lords in the United Kingdom, as well as heads of central election commissions from different countries and delegations from the European Academy for Elections Observation, the GUAM Organization for Democracy and Economic Development, the Independent American Center of Political Monitoring, and other respected organizations (<http://www.trend.az/azerbaijan/election2015/2448142.html>).

II. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS OF THE MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT

1. The parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan were held at a time of aggravated relations between Azerbaijan and the European Union, which influenced media coverage of the elections in the country. Azerbaijan state authorities, numerous experts, political scientists, representatives of international organizations, and elections observation missions criticized OSCE/ODIHR's decision not to send a mission to observe Azerbaijan's parliamentary elections, as well as the disparaging remarks by European institutions concerning human rights violations in the Republic of Azerbaijan;
2. In this situation, shaped after the refusal of OSCE/ODIHR and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to send election observers, PACE's election observation mission played a special role. It is difficult to overestimate the significance of the PACE mission for Azerbaijan, as PACE represented the only European institution that could legitimize the results of the parliamentary elections to Milli Majlis in the eyes of the international, and particularly European, community;
3. Despite the fact that the PACE mission provided a generally positive assessment of the elections in Azerbaijan (the Head of the PACE mission, Jordi Xucla, and mission member Agustin Conde, gave a positive assessment of the elections in local media prior to the end of the voting process and the closing of voting stations), noncompliance with several principles of international elections observation, as well as the fact that several mission members openly disagreed with the general PACE statement, undermine the credibility of the conclusions and monitoring results reported by J. Xucla on behalf of the PACE mission during the briefing on November 2 in Baku;
4. The monitoring focused on international observation missions and organizations, as well as foreign parliamentary delegations and delegations of central election commissions. In the course of our monitoring, we were able to find statements on election observation methods on the websites of only two observation missions. The majority of international missions and organizations did not hold public briefings prior to Election Day, and did not explain their methods or observation focus in the parliamentary elections to Milli Majlis. In Azerbaijan, people found out about the presence of international observation missions from media reports that informed the public about the meetings of the CEC head, M. Panakhov, with members of these missions;

5. Several members of international observation missions and parliamentary delegations commented on the electoral process in Azerbaijan's media prior to Election Day. It is safe to say that the majority of these comments were not impartial or neutral. Several people with the status of international observer expressed their certainty about the victory of the ruling party. It is worth noting that these statements were not based on long-term observation of the electoral process. Despite the fact that a number of international missions declared that they were conducting long-term observation, none of the international missions, organizations, or delegations presented the results of their observation prior to Election Day, and their conclusions and comments in the media were largely biased.
6. Contrary to the principles and standards of international elections observation, a rather large number of international observers offered their comments on Elections Day, and expressed their positive assessments of the voting procedure and elections organization in the media. The principle of neutrality was not observed by the delegation of the PACE mission. (The Head of the PACE mission, Jordi Xucla, and mission member Agustin Conde, gave a positive assessment of the elections in local media prior to the end of the voting process and before the closing of voting stations.) According to our monitoring results, 24 international observers, representing 17 international missions, organizations, parliamentary delegations, and delegations of central election committees, expressed their positive assessment of the electoral process on the day of elections prior to the voting stations closing.
7. As of November 2, 2015, 19 international missions, organizations, and delegations presented their concluding statements after the day of parliamentary elections to Milli Mejlis. However, full reports of elections observations conducted by these organizations, as well as the evidential basis for their conclusions, will be a matter for further research (once the final reports are published).
8. Based on the results of our monitoring, we conclude that a large number of interviews, comments, and statements in the media issued by international observers, missions, organizations, and experts prior to and on Election Day, were not in compliance with the principles and standards of international elections observation and were far from being neutral and impartial. This media campaign aided the legitimatization of the parliamentary election results in Azerbaijan and internationally.

III. OSCE-ODIHR'S REFUSAL TO OBSERVE THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN AZERBAIJAN

The OSCE refused to observe the elections because Azerbaijan state authorities disagreed with the number of observers in the OSCE/ODIHR mission. The OSCE planned an observation mission composed of 30 long-term and 350 short-term observers. However, Azerbaijan state authorities agreed to receive only 6 long-term and 125 short-term observers (<https://www.meydan.tv/en/site/politics/8784/Euro-Observers-Shun-Azerbaijan-Election.htm>).

On August 12-14, OSCE/ODIHR conducted a Needs Assessment Mission in Azerbaijan in order to explore the pre-elections situation in the country, and subsequently prepared and published a report (<http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/azerbaijan/179216?download=true>).

On October 28, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Nils Muiznieks, expressed his criticism to Milli Majlis in regards to Azerbaijan and the parliamentary elections: “Elections in this country, which is rich in natural resources, have been marred by irregularities since the country became independent in 1991. At present, the state of human rights in Azerbaijan makes the predictions for the upcoming elections more pessimistic. Human rights activists, journalists and local observers turned out in “muzzles” due to repressive legislation, arrests based on falsified accusations and forced immigration. In these conditions, it is impossible to hold a real debate on elections.”

<http://contact.az/docs/2015/Want%20to%20Say/102800134510ru.htm#.VjW2fiSYIU1>

At the same time, OSCE/ODIHR was accused in Azerbaijan’s media of “double standards.” The criticism came from Azerbaijan state authorities, numerous experts representing Azerbaijan, and Russian research institutes and NGOs. On several occasions, the criticism came from experts from Turkey, Georgia, Ukraine, and other countries.

Several days prior to Election Day, the majority of Azerbaijan’s media published articles that emphasized the “unconstructive” stance of OSCE/ODIHR and accused the European Union of applying “double standards” to Azerbaijan and pursuing the Union’s political and economic interests.

The day before elections, the Head of the Presidential Administration in Azerbaijan, Ramiz Mehdiyev, published an article in the official media, titled “The Sources of Degradation of European Institutions, or a Policy of Double Standards Towards Azerbaijan.” The article was a response to the European Parliament’s resolution of September 10, 2015, containing criticism of the state of human rights in Azerbaijan. Mehdiyev comments on OSCE/ODIHR’s refusal to send observers to monitor the Azerbaijan parliamentary elections.

On October 31, Politico.eu released an article by the Head of Press Service of the Foreign Affairs Ministry of Azerbaijan, Hikmet Hajiyev, which responded to the criticism of Azerbaijan by Nils Muiznieks, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights.

In his article, Hajiyev stated that “the attitude of OSCE/ODHIR is a blatant violation of its mandate. As it was discussed at the OSCE Permanent Council meeting, the OSCE member-states need to review its mandate.”

<http://www.politico.eu/article/azerbaijan-an-area-of-darkness/>

<http://www.politico.eu/article/free-will-of-azerbaijani-people-letter-to-editor/>

<http://www.1news.az/politics/20151031025821122.html>

In an interview with the media before the elections, the head of Azerbaijan’s CEC, M. Panahov, stated: “The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) has no right to refuse an invitation to send observers to the elections in one or another country in the world. This organization was created specifically for elections monitoring... OSCE/ODIHR violated its mandate. I say this with 99 percent certainty.” Panahov noted that OSCE/ODIHR’s stance changed after the initial consultations on establishing an observation mission to Azerbaijan.

Panakhov also suggested that the violation of OSCE/ODIHR's mandate could be related to the interests of certain communities and states that tried to put pressure on young independent states (<http://www.1news.az/politics/20151031043449193.html>).

Representatives of other countries, delegations, and international organizations who arrived in Azerbaijan to observe the election process, did not refrain from the comments in regards to OSCE/ODIHR.

“The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) has always been looking for “a speck in the eyes” of others. This organization is always looking for the negative,” said the coordinator of the group of observers from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Interparliamentary Assembly, Leonid Slutskiy, who chairs the Committee on the Affairs of CIS in the State Duma (<http://www.1news.az/politics/20151101091921681.html>).

In regards to OSCE/ODIHR's refusal to conduct an observation of parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan, the head of Israel's delegation of observers, Avigdor Lieberman, stated: “As a representative of the state, which experiences double standards and absolutely groundless charges, I would say that international organizations are not a benchmark of objective, fair and principled approach. Unfortunately, in international politics, one always faces full absence of any moral principles.”(<http://www.trend.az/azerbaijan/baku2015/2450541.html>)

In an interview with “Secki-2015.az,” Togrul Ismail, an expert in international affairs from the TOBB University of Economics and Technologies in Ankara, Turkey, stated: “ODIHR does not worry about the democratic situation in Azerbaijan, it worries about the interests of the West. Attempts of pressure by these forces increase before and after the elections.” According to Ismail, the West uses values such as democracy and human rights to put pressure on Azerbaijan (<http://www.trend.az/azerbaijan/election2015/2448407.html>).

IV. ASSESSMENT BY INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS AND DELEGATIONS OF THE ELECTION PROCESS IN AZERBAIJAN

The assessment of the international missions that conducted elections observation of the parliamentary elections in the Republic of Azerbaijan was carried out in accordance with the UN Declaration of Principles for Election Observation adopted by the United Nations on October 27, 2005 (<http://www.osce.org/odihr/16935>). Some of the principles of particular importance are:

- A careful and impartial international election observation provided by reliable methodologies and cooperation with national authorities, national political competitors (political parties, candidates, and supporters of positions on issues put to a referendum), national organizations, election monitoring, and other credible international organizations for election observation;
- International election observation provides a systematic, comprehensive and thorough collection of information on laws, processes, and institutions related to the conduct of elections, as well as objective and professional analysis of such information;

- The international observation conclusions regarding the nature of the electoral process are to be based on the highest standards for accuracy of information and impartiality of analysis (paragraph 4 of the Declaration).
- International election observation is conducted in the interests of the country in which the elections are held, and for the benefit of the international community. Observation is focused on the process and does not cover any specific results of the voting; it relates to the election results only to the extent that they are reported honestly and accurately in a transparent and timely manner.
- International Election Observation Missions are expected to issue timely, accurate, and impartial statements to the public (including providing copies to electoral authorities and other relevant national institutions), presenting their findings, conclusions, and any appropriate recommendations they deem useful for improving election processes.

A. ASSESSMENT BY INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS OF THE ELECTION PROCESS BEFORE ELECTION DAY

Representatives of international organizations, missions, and parliamentary delegations commented openly in Azerbaijan media on the electoral process before Election Day. It should be noted that a significant portion of these comments were far from neutral. Several people with international observer status openly expressed certainty in regards to the victory of the ruling party in the elections. It is worth noting that these statements by international observers were not based on the long-term observation. Despite the fact that a number of international missions declared that they were conducting long-term elections observation, none of the international missions, organizations, or delegations presented the results of their observation prior to Election Day, and their conclusions and comments in the media were largely biased.

Positive assessments of and comments on the electoral process before Election Day were expressed by international observers from the following international missions, delegations, and organizations:

1. The Observation Mission from CIS (the Commonwealth of Independent States)
2. Interparliamentary Assembly of CIS (IPA CIS)
3. Parliamentary delegation of Israel
4. Parliamentary delegation of the Republic of Moldova

B. ASSESSMENT BY INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS ON ELECTION DAY

Despite the fact that making comments and presenting conclusions on Election Day before closing of voting stations is a violation of principles and standards of international observation, a large number of international observers neglected this principle and made comments for the

media during Election Day. Interestingly, a significant number of these comments appeared in the media before 13:00 on November 1.

The PACE delegation did not comply with this principle either. *J. Xukla, the Head of the delegation, and mission member A. Conde, gave positive assessments of the elections in the media before the end of voting and the closing of voting stations.*

According to data collected during the monitoring, 24 international observers representing 17 different international missions, organizations, parliamentary delegations, and delegations of central election commissions expressed positive assessments of the electoral process on Election Day before the voting stations closed:

1. Mission of Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)
2. Mission of observers from CIS
3. Mission from the Interparliamentary Assembly of CIS (IPA CIS)
4. Mission from the International Conference of Political Parties of Asia (ICPPA)
5. Mission from the Parliamentary Assembly of Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC)
6. Mission from the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-speaking countries (Turk PA)
7. The GUAM delegation of observers
8. Delegation of observers of the European Strategic Intelligence and Security Center (ESISC)
9. Delegation of observers of the Marmara Group Strategic and Social Research Foundation
10. Parliamentary delegation of Australia
11. Parliamentary delegation of Israel
12. Parliamentary delegation of the Italian Republic
13. Parliamentary delegation of the Republic of Estonia
14. Delegation of the Central Election Commission of Romania
15. Delegation of the Central Election Commission of the Republic of Belarus
16. Delegation of the Central Election Commission of the Republic of India
17. Independent observers from the United States of America

**C. INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS, ORGANIZATIONS, GROUPS,
PARLIAMENTARY AND INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS, AND
DELEGATIONS OF CENTRAL ELECTION COMMISSIONS WHICH
OBSERVED THE ELECTORAL PROCESS IN AZERBAIJAN**

Mission 1: Observation Mission of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)

<http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/News/News-View-EN.asp?newsid=5847&cat=31>

Delegation composition: 28 members

<http://website-pace.net/documents/10643/1802258/20151101-AdHocElectionObsAzer-BIL.pdf/8ea07f02-d686-43f4-918d-358596088e63>

Head of PACE Mission in Azerbaijan: Jordi Xucla (Spain)

Planned actions:

- Meetings with representatives of parliamentary groups and parties, and extra-parliamentary opposition parties;
- Holding round tables with representatives of media and civil society to discover their opinions about the election campaign;
- Meetings with representatives of diplomatic circles in Baku;
- Observing the voting process and the counting of votes in different regions of country on Elections Day.

On September 21-22, 2015, the PACE delegation (5 members) visited Baku. The aim of the visit was to examine the electoral legislation and assess the election campaign.

On September 23, the delegation prepared a statement on their findings:

<http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/News/News-View-en.asp?newsid=5779&lang=2>

Main points of the statement:

- Regret about the cancellation of the OSCE/ODIHR observation mission in Azerbaijan;
- Call to democratic procedures in elections organization.

Observation methodology: Guidelines for the observation of elections

<http://website-pace.net/documents/10643/436801/GuidelinesElectionObservation-EN.pdf/81adc9f1-f750-4336-9a24-952da2f87506>

In the situation shaped after the refusal of OSCE/ODIHR and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to send election observers, PACE's election observation mission played a special role. It is difficult to overestimate the significance of the PACE mission for Azerbaijan, as PACE represented the only European institution that could legitimize the results of the parliamentary elections to Milli Majlis in the eyes of the international, and particularly European, community.

Positive assessment of the parliamentary elections on Election Day

According to the head of the PACE mission, J. Xucla, the atmosphere during the parliamentary elections was positive.

<http://www.trend.az/azerbaijan/election2015/2450919.html>

<http://secki-2015.az/en/view/news/649/jordi-xucla-positive-atmosphere-has-been-observed-at-elections-so-far->

(PDF version:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B496CCs36GOkeFNaXzhaMnVIUmM/view?usp=sharing>)

According to a member of the PACE mission, A. Conde, the mission did not observe any violations of the law on Election Day.

<http://secki-2015.az/en/view/news/660/pace-representative-voters-are-active-in-the-election-process>

(PDF version:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B496CCs36GOKTWtaUU9Va2JUS2M/view?usp=sharing>)

Preliminary conclusions on the electoral process were presented at the briefing on November 2, in Baku.

Statement by the PACE Election Observation Mission on the parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan on November 1, 2015

Key points:

- Election Day was calm and peaceful across the country. No acts of exerting pressure on voters, or any other incidents in or near the voting stations, were observed.
- The voting process was adequate and generally in line with international standards.
- The preparation for the elections and voting procedure were professionally and technically well-organized.
- During Election Day, the Mission did not report any major or systemic violations of the Election Code. However, in several polling stations minor ballot stuffing was observed.
- The Mission welcomes the introduction of web cameras in 20 percent of polling stations.
- The Mission urges the CEC to further improve the training of staff in electoral procedures.
- Besides electoral issues, the Mission notes with regret that serious concerns in the sphere of human rights still remain in Azerbaijan, as several human rights defenders and NGO activists are imprisoned on different charges.
- In general, a significant increase in voter turnout and transparency of voting and counting procedures demonstrate that the Republic of Azerbaijan has taken another step towards free, fair, and democratic elections, and that the results of this vote express the will of the Azerbaijani people.

Mission 2: Observation Mission from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)

The Mission was launched on October 14, 2015.

<http://cis.minsk.by/news.php?id=5605>

Head of the Mission: Sergei Lebedev

Chief of the Mission's Unit: Yevgeniy Sloboda

Composition: 147 observers (12 long-term observers)

<http://www.cis.minsk.by/news.php?id=5655>

The Mission includes representatives of the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, the Republic of Uzbekistan, members of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States, Parliamentary Assembly of Belarus and Russia Union, and the Executive Committee of CIS.

The Mission's experience in elections observation: elections in CIS state-members

<http://www.e-cis.info/index.php?id=374>

Unfortunately, we could not explore the CIS Mission's methods of election observations, but it should be noted that the mission worked in accordance with its own standards of international election and referendum observation. <http://www.rcoit.ru/upload/iblock/f28/konvenciya.pdf> (see Section 3)

Positive assessment of the parliamentary elections before Election Day

<http://www.trend.az/azerbaijan/election2015/2449124.html>

<http://moscow->

[baku.ru/news/society/rukovoditel_shtaba_missii_nablyudateley_sng_evgeniy_sloboda_v_azerbaydzhane_dlya_vsekh_kandidatov_v_](http://moscow-baku.ru/news/society/rukovoditel_shtaba_missii_nablyudateley_sng_evgeniy_sloboda_v_azerbaydzhane_dlya_vsekh_kandidatov_v/)

<https://1news.az/politics/20151027071346245.html>

<http://secki-2015.az/en/view/news/104/cis-official-the-preparation-for-the-elections-at-a-high-level>

(PDF version: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B496CCs36GOkEdXeUNzTERCRlk/view?usp=sharing>)

<http://secki-2015.az/en/view/news/544/cis-observation-mission-everything-is-ready-for-elections>

(PDF version:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B496CCs36GOkWF81X0RKLWtTYms/view?usp=sharing>)

Positive assessment of the parliamentary elections before Election Day

Head of the Mission, S. Lebedev:

<http://www.trend.az/azerbaijan/election2015/2450902.html>

<http://www.trend.az/azerbaijan/election2015/2450986.html>

<http://1news.az/politics/20151101114750456.html>

Chief of the Mission's Unit, Y. Sloboda:

<http://www.trend.az/azerbaijan/election2015/2451014.html>

<http://secki-2015.az/en/view/news/683/cis-observers-transparent-voting-process-ensured-at-azerbaijan%E2%80%99s-parliamentary-election>

(PDV version:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B496CCs36GOkSXpmX0FvaXE1T00/view?usp=sharing>)

Member of the Mission, Alexei Samosuev:

<http://1news.az/politics/20151101054502741.html>

Positive assessment of the parliamentary elections after Election Day

Head of the Mission, S. Lebedev:

<http://ru.sputnik.az/politics/20151102/402568921.html>

<http://ru.sputnik.az/politics/20151102/402569445.html>

Mission 3: The Interparliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States (IPA CIS)

Head of the Mission: Leonid Slutskiy (Chairman of the Committee on the Affairs of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Eurasian Integration, and Relations with Compatriots in the State Duma of the Russian Federation)

Composition of the mission: MPs from IPA CIS member-states and experts from the International Institute for Monitoring the Development of Democracy, Parliamentary Systems, and Respect for the Electoral Rights of Citizens of States-members of CIS IPA

On IPA CIS's website there are two contradictory messages about the term of the Mission:

- Long-term Mission:

http://www.iacis.ru/pressroom/news/mezhdunarodnyy_institut_monitoringa_razvitiya_demokrati/nablyudateli_ot_mpa_sng_provodyat_dolgosrochnyy_monitoring_vyborov_deputatov_milli_medzhliisa_azerbaydzhanskoy_respubliki/

- Short-term Mission:

http://www.iacis.ru/pressroom/news/mezhdunarodnyy_institut_monitoringa_razvitiya_demokrati/nablyudateli_ot_mpa_sng_priglashey_na_vybory_v_azerbaydzhanskuyu_respubliku/

Positive assessment of the parliamentary elections before Election Day

Head of the Mission, Leonid Slutskiy:

“In Europe they distort the image of Azerbaijan (I am confident that the elections to Milli Majlis of Azerbaijan will demonstrate unity of the majority of the population. In these elections, it will be difficult to find something negative ...)”- The independent socio-political newspaper *New Time*.

<http://secki-2015.az/en/view/news/617/leonid-slutsky-elections-have-been-organized-well-in-azerbaijan>

PDF version: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B496CCs36GOkDNocHIOOTdQZTA/view?usp=sharing>

Positive assessment of the parliamentary elections after Election Day

Head of the Mission, L. Slutskiy:

<http://ru.sputnik.az/politics/20151102/402572664.html>

Mission 4: Mission of the International Conference of Political Parties of Asia (ICAPP)

<http://www.theicapp.org/>

Composition: 9 members

The Mission's registration became public on October 26, 2015

Positive assessment of the parliamentary elections before Election Day

<http://1news.az/politics/20151101025738905.html>

<http://secki-2015.az/en/view/news/725/icapp-parliamentary-elections-in-azerbaijan-fully-meet-international-standards>

PDV version: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B496CCs36GOkNXo5T0N6YUhlUk0/view?usp=sharing>

Positive assessment of the parliamentary elections after Election Day

<http://www.trend.az/azerbaijan/election2015/2451666.html>

Mission 5: The Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC)

Composition: 5 members from 5 states (Azerbaijan, Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece, Romania)

Period of the mission: October 30 –November 3

Mission 6: Turk PA (Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-Speaking Countries)

<http://www.turk-pa.org/news.php?id=2165&lang=en>

Head of the Mission: Serikdžan Kanayev (Member of the Parliament of Kazakhstan)

Composition: MPs from Turkey, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan

The Mission was launched on October 29, 2015

Elections observation experience: monitoring elections in member countries (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey)

Positive assessment of the parliamentary elections on Election Day

Head of the Mission, S. Kanayev:

<http://secki-2015.az/en/view/news/754/turkpa-mission-satisfied-with-elections-in-azerbaijan>

PDV version:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B496CCs36GOkNFJzeG5MdDV5Yzg/view?usp=sharing>

Positive assessment of the parliamentary elections after Election Day

Head of the Mission, S. Kanayev:

<http://ru.sputnik.az/azerbaijan/20151102/402567878.html>

Mission 7: GUAM Organization for Democracy and Economic Development

Composition: 3 members (Ukraine –MP Ivan Krulko; Georgia –Zurab Abashidze; General Secretary of GUAM, Valery Chechelashvili)

Mission's period: October 31 –November 3

Positive assessment of the parliamentary elections on Election Day

Head of the Mission, V. Chechelashvili

<http://secki-2015.az/en/view/news/742/guam-secretary-general-parliamentary-elections-in-azerbaijan-meet-international-norms>

PDF version: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B496CCs36GOkb3J6Q1ITQzVWmM/view?usp=sharing>

Positive assessment of the parliamentary elections after Election Day

Head of the Mission, V. Chechelashvili

<https://www.1news.az/politics/20151102125225224.html>

Mission 8: CAPDI (Centrist Asia Pacific Democrats International)

<http://www.trend.az/azerbaijan/election2015/2450549.html>

Composition: 10 members (Indonesia, Philippines, Pakistan)

This is a short-term mission.

In 2013, the mission positively assessed the presidential elections in Azerbaijan.

Mission 9: The European Centre for Strategic Studies and Security (ESISC)

Brussels

<http://www.esisc.org/>

Head of the Mission: Claude Monique

Composition: 8 members

Positive assessment of the parliamentary elections on Election Day

Head of the Mission, C. Monique:

<http://www.trend.az/azerbaijan/election2015/2451033.html>

Positive assessment of the parliamentary elections after Elections Day

Head of the Mission, C. Monique:

<http://secki-2015.az/en/view/news/884/esisc-azerbaijan%E2%80%99s-parliamentary-elections-should-be-example-for-entire-region>

PDV version: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B496CCs36GOkd0lvtMxNIR1Z0k/view?usp=sharing>

<http://www.trend.az/azerbaijan/election2015/2451618.html>

Mission 10: The Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC)

Mission's period: 3 days, including Election Day

Positive assessment of the parliamentary elections on Election Day

MP from Greece, Simos Kedikoglou:

<http://www.trend.az/azerbaijan/election2015/2451056.html>

Positive assessment of the parliamentary elections after Election Day

MP from Greece, Simos Kedikoglou:

<https://www.1news.az/politics/20151102104313715.html>

MP from Bulgaria, Petar Kanev

<https://www.1news.az/politics/20151102104313715.html>

Mission 11: Strategic and Social Research Foundation Marmara Group

Turkey

Positive assessment of the parliamentary elections on Election Day

<http://secki-2015.az/en/view/news/762/turkish-observer-azerbajjani-youth-active-in-parliamentary-election>

PDF version: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B496CCs36GOkVnN5bGthZzM2UFU/view?usp=sharing>

Mission 12: The Organization of Islamic Cooperation

Head of the Mission : Safif Kabashi Kabib

Positive assessment of the parliamentary elections after Election Day

Head of the Mission, S. Kabib:

<https://www.1news.az/politics/20151102010120423.html>

<http://www.trend.az/azerbaijan/election2015/2451694.html>

Mission 13: European Parliament

Positive assessment of the parliamentary elections after Election Day

Representative of the European Parliament from Austria, Franz Obermayr:

<http://ru.sputnik.az/politics/20151102/402569912.html>

Parliamentary delegations

Parliamentary Delegation of Australia

Head: Luke Simpkins

- A meeting with the Head of Azerbaijan's CEC, M. Panakhov:

• <http://www.trend.az/azerbaijan/election2015/2449464.html>

- Visit to Ganja:

<http://secki-2015.az/en/view/news/540/australian-parliamentary-delegation-visits-ganja>

PDF version:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B496CCs36GOkVkuUGlzVE5OX1E/view?usp=sharing>

Positive assessment of the parliamentary elections on Election Day

Luke Simpkins: "Our mission has not observed any violations of the law. The elections are held in accordance with the law." <http://www.trend.az/azerbaijan/election2015/2451034.html>

Positive assessment of the parliamentary elections after Election Day

During the briefing on November 2, Luke Simpkins stated that the Australian delegation had observed 20 voting stations. According to the head of the mission, some of the elements of the elections, which the mission observed in Azerbaijan, could be applied in Australia.

A member of the delegation, David Johnston, stated that no violations of the law had been observed by the mission. <https://www.1news.az/politics/20151102124437627.html>

Belarus

Positive assessment of the parliamentary elections on Election Day

According to the Press Office of the Embassy of Belarus in Azerbaijan, the atmosphere at the voting stations, which were visited by observers from Belarus, was calm and welcoming; the

delegation did not observe any violations of the law.

<http://1news.az/politics/20151101103618544.html>

Israel

Head: Avigdor Lieberman

Positive assessment of the parliamentary elections before Election Day

<http://www.trend.az/azerbaijan/baku2015/2450541.html>

Positive assessment of the parliamentary elections on the elections day

According to Sofa Landver, member of Knesset, the elections were well-organized and the voting process went smoothly.

<http://www.trend.az/azerbaijan/election2015/2450961.html>

Positive assessment of the parliamentary elections after Elections Day

The Head of the mission, A. Lieberman, stated: “In accordance with all the criteria, these elections were in compliance with the highest standards, they were transparent, open and provided equal opportunities for all the participants. We are glad that a young Republic of Azerbaijan has achieved such high results in holding elections in such a short period of time.”

“At the voting stations that I observed everything was more than polite and careful,” said Lieberman.

<https://www.1news.az/politics/20151102114912408.html>

Lithuania

Head: Zenonas Vaigauskas

- A meeting with the Head of Azerbaijan’s CEC, M. Panakhov:

<http://1news.az/politics/20151031015558925.html>

Latvia

Positive assessment of the parliamentary elections after Election Day

Latvia’s MP Romans Naudins stated: “We visited seven voting stations and are pleased with the high level of the elections... We also met with our colleagues from other countries, but they did not express any criticism. It is a pity that ODIHR/OSCE did not come, but this is its own business.”

<http://www.trend.az/azerbaijan/election2015/2451324.html>

Moldova

Positive assessment of the parliamentary elections before Election Day

According to the Head of the NGO called House of Commons of the Republic of Moldova, Aurelia Grigoriu, the preparation for the parliamentary elections was in accordance with electoral legislation and the democratic approach. “I am sure that the voting will be adequately held without any violations. In Azerbaijan, there are all preconditions for this –legislation and

electoral system that allow to ensure the transparency and legality of the electoral process,” stated A. Grigoriu (Nedelya. Jivaya gazeta October 30 –November 5).

Malaysia

- A meeting with the Head of Azerbaijan’s CEC, M. Panakhov
<http://www.1news.az/politics/20151030031023619.htm>

Russian Federation

Positive assessment of the parliamentary elections before Election Day

According to Sergey Markov, the Envoy of Russia’s President V. Putin and a political scientist, the parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan should be recognized by the West. Apart from this, the politician stated that the ruling party in Azerbaijan had high chances of winning the elections because it contributed to improving living conditions and political stability in the country.

<http://secki-2015.az/en/view/news/416/sergei-markov-parliamentary-elections-in-azerbaijan-will-be-recognized-by-western-politicians->

PDF version

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B496CCs36GOkWXZuUTV3RXRQOG8/view?usp=sharing>

Positive assessment of the parliamentary election after Election Day

According to Sergey Markov, the Envoy of Russia’s President V. Putin and a political scientist, the parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan were held in accordance with the law and without any violations of the law. A member of Russia’s State Duma, Aleksandr Sidyakin, stated that the elections were held peacefully.

<http://secki-2015.az/en/view/news/822/russian-delegation-no-law-violations-have-been-recorded-at-parliamentary-elections>

PDF version:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B496CCs36GOkTk43THdka2xJZjA/view?usp=sharing>

Italy

Positive assessment of the parliamentary election on Election Day

According to an Italian MP, Sergio Divina, the parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan were held in compliance with the European standards.

<http://secki-2015.az/en/view/news/743/italian-observer-elections-in-azerbaijan-meet-european-standards>

PDF version: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B496CCs36GOkZlJkcjJOFhjZmc/view?usp=sharing>

Positive assessment of the parliamentary election after Election Day

On November 2, Sergio Divina stated that the turnout of voters on Election Day had been high and that he had personally talked to some of the voters who were enthusiastic about their participation in the elections. According to the media report, S. Divina stated that the parliamentary elections were “close to perfection.” Apart from this, S. Divina claimed that the OSCE’s refusal to observe the parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan damages the image of OSCE, not of Azerbaijan.

<http://ru.sputnik.az/azerbaijan/20151102/402570968.html>

Pakistan

Head: Mujahid Hussain

Positive assessment of the parliamentary elections after Election Day

On November 2, the Head of the delegation, Mujahid Hussain, stated: “The elections to Milli Majlis are a step toward the democratic future and development of Azerbaijan. We are sincerely glad about the success of our fraternal country and that the elections were transparent and fair.”

<http://www.1news.az/politics/20151102020941506.html>

Serbia

Positive assessment of the parliamentary elections after the Election Day

On November 2, a deputy speaker of the Parliament of Serbia, Vladimir Marinkovic, stated: “We had a chance to talk to observers, including the representatives of opposition parties and independent candidates, media, and citizens. We did not hear any complaints from observers. It is very important for us that the elections were held in a transparent and tolerant atmosphere. This is a very good signal that indicates the development of democracy in the country.”

Apart from this, V. Marinkovic pointed out that the voting count was transparent and a large number of observers were present during the voting count procedure.

<http://www.trend.az/azerbaijan/election2015/2451644.html>

Estonia

Positive assessment of the parliamentary elections on Election Day

The Head of the delegation, Mikhail Korb, stated that, at voting stations visited by the delegation, there were present a large number of observers from different political parties in Azerbaijan.

<https://www.1news.az/politics/20151101074956578.html>

Positive assessment of the parliamentary elections after Election Day

On November 2, a member of the delegation, Erki Savisaar, pointed out that the electoral process was well-organized and that the voting count was transparent.

<http://www.1news.az/politics/20151102020655037.html>

Delegations of central election commissions

Romania

Positive assessment of the parliamentary elections on Election Day

According to a member of the Romanian CEC delegation, Razvan Cinka, the parliamentary elections were well-organized.

<http://www.trend.az/azerbaijan/election2015/2451003.html>

Russian Federation

Positive assessment of the parliamentary elections after Election Day

The Head of the delegation, Vladimir Churov, stated: “The elections were well-organized, voting stations were prepared in accordance with the norms. The elections were fair, transparent and democratic, and they were conducted in accordance with the laws of Azerbaijan.”<http://ru.sputnik.az/politics/20151102/402568327.html>

V. Churov also pointed out that the voter lists in Azerbaijan are “the most accurate in Europe and even Eurasia.”<http://ru.sputnik.az/politics/20151102/402572041.html>

Belarus

Positive assessment of the parliamentary elections on Election Day

The Head of the CEC of Belarus, Lidiya Yermoshina, expressed the opinion that the elections would be held peacefully.

<http://www.trend.az/azerbaijan/election2015/2450896.html>

India

Positive assessment of the parliamentary elections on Election Day

Two members of the CEC of India, Suresh Chandra and Vijai Jolie, stated that the elections were well-organized and that the electoral process was transparent and democratic.

<https://www.1news.az/politics/20151101074956578.html>

Delegations of central election commissions from other states:

- Ukraine
- Kazakhstan
- Moldova
- Georgia
- Kirgizstan
- Tajikistan
- Turkmenistan
- Uzbekistan

<http://www.1news.az/politics/20151031103827940.html><http://www.1news.az/politics/20151031103827940.html>

Other international observers who were not members of international missions, delegations or organizations

United States of America

Positive assessment of the parliamentary elections on Election Day

According to an ex-congressman from California, Joe Baca, the elections met all the requisite standards and he did not observe any violations.

<http://www.trend.az/azerbaijan/election2015/2450981.html>

According to an ex-congressman from Texas, Solomon Ortiz, the turnout at the elections in Azerbaijan in the morning hours is higher than in the United States, which indicates “an aspiration to democracy.” S. Ortiz also pointed out that the parliamentary elections were transparent.

<http://www.trend.az/azerbaijan/election2015/2450955.html>

Germany

Positive assessment of the parliamentary elections on Election Day

Elisabeth Altmann, a representative of the German Green Party, stated that, at the voting stations she had visited, conditions were adequate and she had not observed any violations of the law.

<http://1news.az/politics/20151101061921680.html>

Estonia

Positive assessment of the parliamentary elections on Election Day

According to Uno Silberg, Director at Estonian Academy of Security Sciences, voter turnout was high and the electoral process was well-organized.

<http://secki-2015.az/en/view/news/727/estonian-observer-the-election-process-is-organized-at-a-high-level>

PDV version:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B496CCs36GOkUFhXQWFJR18wLTg/view?usp=sharing>

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Positive assessment of the parliamentary elections on Election Day

The MP from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Nermina Kapetanovic, stated that the elections were organized in a transparent and democratic way.

<http://secki-2015.az/en/view/news/759/int%E2%80%99l-observer-election-in-azerbaijan-transparent-democratic>

PDF version:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B496CCs36GOkapnDTnBRZXVRWTg/view?usp=sharing>

Latvia

Positive assessment of the parliamentary elections on Election Day

The Head of the Defense, Internal Affairs, and Corruption Prevention Committee of the Riga City Council, Dainis Turlais, stated that the parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan were held in accordance with international standards.

<http://secki-2015.az/en/view/news/760/election-in-azerbaijan-meets-int%25E2%2580%2599l-standards-says-latvian-observer>

PDF

version: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B496CCs36GOkWGhtVVA3cHZheU0/view?usp=sharing>

Croatia

Positive assessment of the parliamentary elections on Election Day

According to Mirza Sabic, the elections were held in accordance with the law.

<http://secki-2015.az/en/view/news/740/croatian-observer-voting-process-continues-in-accordance-with-law>

PDF version:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B496CCs36GOkdk56UDN5VVhwNWM/view?usp=sharing>

Assessment of the electoral process (before Election Day) by political scientists, experts, and heads of civic organizations from foreign countries

Ukrainian political scientist Olexiy Voronenko

According to Voronenko, there would not be any “unpleasant surprises” during the elections.

Apart from this, the Ukrainian political scientist pointed out that voters in Azerbaijan do not feel any pressure from the government’s side. On the contrary, the West is putting pressure on Azerbaijan every day.

<http://www.1news.az/politics/20151029050942084.html>

Russian expert Andrey Ivanov

According to the expert, Azerbaijan’s political system is stable, and he predicted that there would not be any incidents during the elections.

<http://secki-2015.az/en/view/news/554/andrei-ivanov-azerbaijan-has-stable-political-system>

PDF version: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B496CCs36GOkZFJSMWRQcmRfeG8/view?usp=sharing>

Russian journalist Rostislav Ischenko

According to the journalist, the situation in Azerbaijan is stable and calm, and he predicted that there would not be any incidents during the elections.

<http://secki-2015.az/en/view/news/504/rostislav-ishchenko-situation-in-azerbaijan-is-peaceful-and-stable>

PDF version:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B496CCs36GOkMTRLb1RyclhNOEE/view?usp=sharing>

Head of a political consulting group, Jason Katz

According to Katz, The Tool Shed Group, LLC, the elections in Azerbaijan would be free and fair.

<http://secki-2015.az/en/view/news/501/jason-katz-azerbaijan-will-have-free-and-fair-elections>

PDF version:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B496CCs36GOkQUUxbVJCUXICUKU/view?usp=sharing>

Journalist Nikolai Gorshkov

According to the Director and Editor at Sputnik News Ltd, the West's criticism in regards to Azerbaijan is unfair and biased. He pointed out that there are issues with democracy and objectivity in the West.

<http://secki-2015.az/en/view/news/464/british-journalist-criticism-towards-azerbaijan-is-unfair-and-biased>

PDF version:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B496CCs36GOkYXc5V0IKLXhtUUk/view?usp=sharing>

Georgian politician Ramin Bairamov

According to the politician and member of the Georgian parliament, the victory of the ruling political team will stimulate the strengthening of Azerbaijan's independence and development.

<http://secki-2015.az/en/view/news/463/georgian-expert-those-putting-pressure-on-azerbaijan-want-defeat-the-country>

PDF version:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B496CCs36GOkWWhqMIKU0N2YVvk/view?usp=sharing>

Russian research fellow Stanislav Pritchkin

According to Pritchkin, OSCE's refusal to observe the parliamentary elections would give an impetus to free and fair elections. Additionally, the scholar predicted that nothing unexpected would occur during the elections.

<http://secki-2015.az/en/view/news/388/stanislav-pritchkin-azerbaijan-has-strong-stimulus-to-hold-fair-and-transparent-elections>

PDF version:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B496CCs36GOkTHA0Z1hNX2ZqRTg/view?usp=sharing>