

News from Copenhagen

Election observation underway in Azerbaijan, findings to be presented Thursday



Margareta Kiener Nellen and Nilza de Sena open the parliamentary briefings in Baku, 9 April 2018.



Margareta Kiener Nellen and Nilza de Sena speak to the press in Baku, 11 April 2018.

International observers of the early presidential election in Azerbaijan have fanned out across the country for the 11 April vote. Nilza de Sena (MP, Portugal) is leading more than 300 OSCE short-term observers and Margareta Kiener Nellen (MP, Switzerland) is serving as head of the OSCE PA mission, which includes some 40 members of parliament from more than 20 countries. The observers will present their preliminary post-election statement at a press conference in Baku on Thursday.

The international election observation mission is a common endeavour involving the OSCE PA, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE). The ODIHR mission is led by Ambassador Corien Jonker and the PACE mission is led by Viorel Riceard Badea. As Special Co-ordinator responsible for leading the short-term OSCE observer mission, Nilza de Sena will deliver the mission's preliminary findings and conclusions, followed by remarks from Badea and Jonker.

The international election observation mission comprises some 350 observers from 40 countries, including 265 long-term and short-term observers deployed by ODIHR, 48

parliamentarians and staff from the OSCE PA and 37 from PACE.

Nilza de Sena is Chair of the OSCE PA's Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment. Kiener Nellen is the Head of Switzerland's Delegation to the OSCE PA.

"The short-term observer reports, together with the briefings, the findings of the long-term observers, and input from the parliamentarians with personal experience in elections and politics, will help us reach an objective, impartial and accurate assessment of the conduct of this election based on solid facts," de Sena said.

"As elected members of parliament, our observers can personally attest to the importance of holding democratic elections," said Kiener Nellen. "The Assembly attaches great importance to each mission we undertake, and assesses all elections based on the same commitments agreed to in the OSCE's 1990 Copenhagen Document."

From the International Secretariat, the OSCE PA observation mission to Azerbaijan is supported by Roberto Montella, Andreas Nothelle, Andreas Baker, Francesco Pagani and Tim Knoblaue.

PA hosts delegation of Swedish and Belarusian students and civil society activists

A group of students and civil society activists from Sweden and Belarus visited the International Secretariat on Monday and discussed with OSCE PA staff a variety of subjects including OSCE election observation and the Assembly's work on the issue of migration. The visit was part of a joint project of the Centre for Swedish Studies in Minsk and the Association of Foreign Affairs in Lund, within the EU's Eastern Partnership framework.

OSCE PA staff briefed the students on the general work of the Assembly, with Head of Administration for Election Observation Iryna Sabashuk describing how election observation works and Programme Officer Farimah Daftary providing an overview of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration. Deputy Secretary General Gustavo Pallares briefed the delegation on the overall objectives, background and working methods of the Assembly.



Iryna Sabashuk briefs students on OSCE election observation.

The students and activists raised a number of interesting topics in a wide-ranging discussion that touched on OSCE PA-Belarus co-operation, the work of the OSCE PA Special Representatives including on gender and human trafficking issues, and challenges related to election observation including the issue of follow-up and ensuring that election-related recommendations are implemented.