

News from Copenhagen

Azerbaijan ‘needs to do much more,’ says Grossruck



Wolfgang Grossruck at a polling station in Baku on 7 November



A voter searching for her name on the voters list

In a statement issued on 8 November, international observers concluded that while the 7 November parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan were characterized by a peaceful atmosphere with all opposition parties participating in the political process, the conduct of the elections overall was not sufficient to constitute meaningful progress in the democratic development of the country.

The statement was delivered at a press conference in Baku on behalf of the OSCE by Wolfgang Grossruck, who was appointed by President Petros Efthymiou to head the OSCE PA delegation and by OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Kanat Saudabayev to lead the short-term OSCE observer mission. It noted that the Central Election Commission administered the technical aspects of the electoral process well. But limitations of media freedom and freedom of assembly, and a deficient candidate registration process, further weakened the opposition and made vibrant political discourse almost impossible. This and a restricted campaign environment created an uneven playing field for candidates, making it difficult for voters to make an informed choice.

“It is never easy to do justice to a country which is developing its democratic institutions, especially in a difficult environment. We have seen the many efforts made

to make progress in the areas in which the country does very well, and we welcome them as much as the hospitality demonstrated by all our interlocutors. However, despite all the efforts made, the country needs to do much more to make progress in developing a truly pluralist democracy,” said Mr. Grossruck.

On the positive side, voters had the opportunity to check the centralized voter register and request correction or inclusion, and the CEC conducted a voter education campaign, including in the media.

Mr. Grossruck participated in a pre-assessment mission to the country from 14 to 18 October, during which he met with the President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, the Speaker of the Parliament Ogtay Asadov, and the Deputy Speaker and leader of Azerbaijan’s PA Delegation, Bahar Muradova

The OSCE PA’s observation mission consisted of more than 40 Members of Parliament from 20 countries and was supported by Special Representative Andreas Nothelle, Logistics Officer Petra Jezkova and Programme Officer Anna Chernova. It worked closely with the OSCE/ODIHR, the PACE, and the European Parliament.

The full post-election statement is available at the Assembly’s website, www.oscepa.org.

Assembly’s Bureau to meet in Astana before OSCE Summit

The OSCE PA Bureau, consisting of the Assembly’s President, the nine Vice-Presidents, the Treasurer, the Officers of the three General Committees and the President Emeritus, will meet on the eve of the OSCE Summit of Heads of State or Government, being held on 1-2 December 2010 in Astana, Kazakhstan.

The Bureau meeting, to be held on 30 November from 14:00-17:00, will be addressed by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Kazakhstan’s Foreign Minister and Secretary of State, Kanat Saudabayev.

In addition to Bureau members, the chairs of the OSCE PA Ad Hoc Committees and the PA’s Special Representatives have also been invited to participate in the meeting.

Assembly President Petros Efthymiou (Greece) will make an address at the opening session of the Astana Summit on 1 December.

The Astana Summit is the seventh such Summit in the OSCE’s history. Previous summits were held 1975 in Helsinki, 1990 in Paris, 1992 in Helsinki, 1994 in Budapest, 1996 in Lisbon and 1999 in Istanbul.