



**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR TACAN İLDEM
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TURKEY
Concerning the presidential elections held on 9 October 2013 in Azerbaijan
(967th Meeting of the Permanent Council, 17 October 2013)**

Thank you Mr. Chairperson.

I wish to first reiterate our congratulations to the President and people of Azerbaijan on the outcome of the presidential elections held on 9 October. As also stated by my Ministry, we consider that the presidential elections, which were held in an environment of peace and tranquility, constitute an important step regarding democracy in friendly Azerbaijan. We are particularly pleased with the high voter turnout and the degree of transparency, and see these as additional signs of Azerbaijan's will to further its democracy.

The OSCE is an organization which serves as a forum for constructive engagement and political dialogue, created by countries having espoused democratic values. It is therefore important for all those operating under the OSCE to fashion their actions and statements to serve the purpose of "cooperation", which figures most prominently in our organization's name.

We have examined the statement of preliminary findings and conclusions issued on election day by the International Election Observation Mission jointly undertaken by the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

ODIHR's election monitoring activities are certainly a hallmark of our Organization. It is recognized by many as the international "gold standard" in its field. However, it also goes without saying that a constant self-assessment is necessary in order to maintain this standard. This also includes an objective and even-handed, and therefore consistent, attitude towards all countries. In the case of Azerbaijan, some may advance that ODIHR imparted with a very serious degree of criticism at a stage comparatively earlier than with other participating States.

There have been cases in the recent past when ODIHR came up with somewhat positive and optimistic preliminary findings on the elections in certain participating States. I recall this august body deliberating on these elections based on those positive preliminary reports, whereas ODIHR's much more critical reports were issued even immediately after the relevant Permanent Council meetings, leading to a situation in which the critical follow-up reports passed unnoticed. Perhaps I may take this opportunity to bring to the kind consideration of the



Permanent Council a suggestion to find ways to overview the performance of elections that take place in participating States on the basis of the totality of the reports prepared and issued by the ODIHR.

As a matter of principle, ODIHR's technical findings and its conclusions do not and cannot alter what I said earlier: that the OSCE is a political organization for dialogue, engagement and cooperation. Let me add that the institutions are part of *such* an organization.

Within this context, statements which may wish to draw attention to technical matters open to criticism in participating States must be carefully calibrated in order not to hamper cooperation and dialogue. This is a pre-condition for the establishment of an environment of sustained security and stability in the OSCE geography. Cooperation and dialogue, in turn, hinge upon an engagement of constructive character with a view to adding vigor to existing commitments.

It would therefore be of service to all, that political matters be dealt with at the political level, particularly when these are being addressed publicly. In this respect we took good note of the statement made by the Chairman-in-Office.

Thank you.