

ESISC PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION IN AZERBAIJAN

By

Claude Moniquet – CEO

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I. Preamble

ESISC has conducted an independent observation mission in Azerbaijan for October 9 Presidential elections.

ESISC Electoral Observation Mission assessed that October 9 elections were conducted with a high level of transparency and a strict respect of international standards.

Even if Azerbaijan is still a country in transition and in stabilization, it satisfied all the due criteria of free, fair and transparent elections.

ESISC was particularly impressed by the openness of the relevant authorities (including the Central Elections Commission) and its willingness to collaborate with the international community. It especially acknowledges the effort made to facilitate the work of the hundreds of foreign observers present in Baku for this important occasion.

We must emphasize that the Election observation delegations of PACE and the EP arrived at the same conclusion regarding the Election Day as the ESISC observers.

OSCE/ODIHR report is, as we expected, much more critical. The opposite would have been impossible for an international institution for which “Azerbaijan bashing“appears to be “business as usual“.¹

The mission was preceded by three pre-electoral missions realized on the field by Claude MONIQUET – ESISC CEO and William RACIMORA – ESISC vice CEO. In those missions the two ESISC experts met Central Elections Commission’s representatives, NGO’s members, diplomats, local journalists and several candidates from the opposition including Mr Jamil HASANLI, main Challenger of the incumbent President. During those pre-electoral missions we found that the freedom of the press and human rights of the candidates and others political activists were respected.

II. Pre-electoral missions

The reports of the 3 pre-electoral missions are available on the ESISC website in their full version.²

The first mission, led by William Racimora, ESISC vice CEO, was primarily devoted to study the political opposition and also the Central Elections Commission (CEC). As a reminder, our findings were positive.

About the political opposition, we wrote: *“There are 55 state registered political parties in the Republic of Azerbaijan. The organization and activities of political parties in the Republic of Azerbaijan is regulated by Constitution, Civil Code,*

¹“ Remarks on the second interim report of the OSCE/ODIHR“, MONIQUET Cl.; RACIMORA W.;

<http://www.esisc.org/publications/analyses/remarks-on-the-second-interim-report-of-the-osceodihr>

² First report : <http://www.esisc.org/publications/analyses/the-republic-of-azerbaijan-a-model-of-good-governance>

Second report : <http://www.esisc.org/publications/analyses/remarks-on-the-first-interim-report-of-the-osceodihr>

Third report : <http://www.esisc.org/publications/analyses/remarks-on-the-second-interim-report-of-the-osceodihr>

Election Code, Law "on Political Parties", Law "on State Registration and Registry of Legal Entities", Law on "Financial Accounting" and other normative-legal acts. More than 40 political parties stand in opposition position to the current government. 11 parties, including 8 opposition parties are represented by 84 MPs in the Parliament (Milli Majlis). New Azerbaijan Party has 71, Civil Solidarity Party has 3, Motherland Party has 2 MP seats, Social Welfare Party, and each of Whole Azerbaijan Popular Front Party, Great Establishment Party, Civil Unity Party, The Justice Party, Hope Party, Azerbaijan Political Party of Democratic Reforms and Azerbaijan National Revival Movement Party has 1 MP seat. There are several opposition parties like National Independence Party, Communist Party, Musavat Party, Modern Musavat Party, Democratic Party, Democratic Azerbaijan World Party, Azerbaijan People Front Party and Azerbaijan Classical People Front Party that have been elected at the local government level and currently possess sits in local councils.

According to the Law "on political parties", they have the right to receive financial support from the state budget depending on the results of the recent elections to the Parliament (Milli Majlis), like in Western Europe. Thus, the state budget for 2013 is expected to be in the amount of 2.5 million AZN. According to the Article 17-1.2 of the mentioned Law, 10 percent of the funds are allocated for the parties that have won at least 3 percent of the valid votes in the election, but are not represented in the parliament. Currently, there are no political parties that meet this criterion. 40 percent of the funds provided for the financing of political parties from the state budget are shared equally between the parties represented in the parliament. 50 percent of the funds are allocated for the parties represented in the Parliament according to the number of their MPs³.

About the CEC, we wrote: "In accordance with party affiliation of the elected MPs of the National Assembly two-thirds of the composition of the Central Election Commission is made up of representatives of political parties. One-third of the members of the Commission are appointed from the majority party in parliament, while one-third from the candidates submitted by the minority parties and one third by the independant parties. Moreover, as it is mentioned in the OSCE report

³ "The Republic of Azerbaijan : A model of good governance", RACIMORA, W. : <http://www.esisc.org/publications/analyses/the-republic-of-azerbaijan-a-model-of-good-governance>

*itself, only one third of the Central Election Commission which is responsible to conduct the election is appointed by the democratically-elected parliamentary majority. Even better the electoral code of Azerbaijan includes in fact extensive provisions protecting the fairness of the elections and the integrity of the voters*⁴.

The second mission, also led by William Racimora was especially devoted to the study of the press freedom.

Freedom of the press is a prerequisite for the democratic functioning of a country. Moreover, without the freedom of the media, it may not be legitimate and fair elections.

To recall, during our second mission on the field we have identify nine cases of journalists (or activists) who are currently in jail or under indictment in the context of the election campaign. Two of them are listed in the item number 3 of the following lists:

1. ***“Hilal Mammadov*** has been charged of illegal possession of 33,475 g of heroin, which had been found on his person and at his premises. He never denied the charges but said the drug was for “his personnel use“.

Hilal Mammadov has been also charged of treason, as he had been involved in espionage activities of the secret services of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Moreover, in April and October 2006 he explicitly committed acts aimed at incitement of national hatred in mass media. In December 2012 his case was submitted to the Baku Court on Grave Crimes for examination. The judicial examination is still pending.

2. ***Avaz Zeynalli***, editor-in-chief of “Khural” newspaper, has been found guilty of blackmailing several persons with publication of information which could harm their personal and business reputation. He has also been found guilty of receiving bribes in large amounts, tax evasion and non-compliance with court decisions.

3. ***Tofiq Yagublu*** and ***Ilqar Mammadov*** have been charged with organization of life-threatening violence against the police officers and an attempt to use mass unrest, deliberate destruction of private property and other unlawful

⁴ Ibid

acts, which took place in January 2013 in the town of Ismayilli, with the aim to create further tensions and break public order.

Preliminary investigation of their case is pending.

4. **Faramaz Allahverdiyev** was sentenced to 4.6 years being convicted of call to riots, as well as to violation, and illegal border crossing under the decision of the court of the Nizami district of Baku on August 22, 2012.

In November of 2010, **F.Allahverdiyev** illegally crossed the borders of the Azerbaijani Republic without established documents outside of a border checkpoint from Nakhchevan Autonomic Republic to Turkey, and on the same way returned from Republic of Turkey to the Republic of Azerbaijan in October of 2011.

Moreover, through the internet, **F.Allahverdiyev** called to riots accompanied with violation of public order, setting on fire, disobedience to state authorities, and destruction of property.

5. On 26 September 2011, **Huseynov Fuad** was sentenced to six and a half years in prison by the Court of Ujar region on charges of hooliganism using arms or things used as arms after exposing illegal activities of public officials in the, in particular, involvement in drug trafficking and trafficking in persons.

The reason why **F.Huseynov** was sentenced is that he committed biased hooliganism and caused bodily harm to two people with pocket knife.

F.Huseynov had previously served sentence five times on less heavy harm to health, roguery, hooliganism, undeliberate heavy or less heavy harm to health, disrespect to court, and other crimes.

6. **Aliyev Nijat** was convicted of illegal distribution of religious literature, religious items, incitement of national, racial, social or religious hostility, humiliation of national honor sale and distribution without appropriate authorization illegal purchase, possession, and transfer of drugs.

Currently, criminal case on him is being reviewed by the court.

7. **Araz Guliyev** was sentenced to 8 years of prison for illegal possession, carrying, and transportation of fire arms, organization of actions causing public order, inciting religious animosity and hostility, insulting the national flag of the

Azerbaijani Republic, and violence against a representative of the authority under the decision of Lankaran Court of Grave Crimes dated April 5, 2013.

*Currently, the cases of **A.Guliyev** and others are considered in the court of appeal.*

8. *On July 29, 2013, at about 22:00, **Sardar Aliyev (Alibayli)** quarrelled with N.Aliyev without serious reasons and caused bodily harm to him with stone, thus making hooliganism act. **Sardar Aliyev** was brought to responsibility as the accused on August 1 of 2013, and was arrested under the decision of the district court.*

Currently, criminal investigation on his case continues⁵.

None of these nine cases has seemed different from what can be observed in the US or in the EU countries. Given the importance of this issue, we decided to demonstrate it in the next chapter. It will be devoted to the study of similar cases in the US or in the EU. And no serious analyst has ever questioned the quality of US or EU countries democracy.

The third pre-electoral mission was led by Claude Moniquet, ESISC CEO.

During his mission Claude Moniquet has met the most prominent opposition candidates which his main representative, Mr. Hasanli. In fact, Claude Moniquet personally met three opposition leaders: Mr Gudrat Hasanguliyev, Mr Araz Alizade and Mr Jamil Hasanli. The discussions demonstrated that the three candidates were completely free to speak. To recall, Claude Moniquet has resumed those meetings in the third pre-electoral mission report⁶:

1) Mr Hasanguliyev and Mr Alizade underlined the “*general lack of culture of Democracy*” in the country to explain the tensions and verbal violence between the candidates.

2) They both acknowledged that the political life is “too polarized”: “*in a democracy, we must agree that all the good people and the good ideas cannot be on one side and all the bad people and the bad ideas on the other side*” said M. Alizade.

⁵ “Remarks on the first interim report of the OSCE/ODIHR”, RACIMORA, W. :

<http://www.esisc.org/publications/analyses/remarks-on-the-first-interim-report-of-the-osceodihr>

⁶ “Remarks on the second interim report of the OSCE/ODIHR”, MONIQUET Cl.; RACIMORA W.;

<http://www.esisc.org/publications/analyses/remarks-on-the-second-interim-report-of-the-osceodihr>

- 3) Both Mr Hasanguliyev and Mr Alizade told us that *“it is wrong to describe Azerbaijan as a dictatorship [as so many NGO do] or a country where censorship exist as “many opposition newspapers and websites exist and are freely available”.*
- 4) Concerning more precisely the case of M. Avaz Zeynalli, editor-in-chief of Khural” newspaper, which was found guilty of various criminal offences and is often portrayed as a “political prisoner,” Mr Alizade told us: *“he just used his position to blackmail prominent personalities and take bribes...”*
- 5) Mr Hasanguliyev explained to us that *“as the standards of life are increasing and economy does well, the population is not very interested in new ideas [opposition ideas]”.*
- 6) Mr Hasanguliyev and Mr Alizade criticized openly the government for not allowing enough financial means to the political life and to the parties.
- 7) Mr Alizade told us that he could agree with the international and regional independence policy of President Aliyev but that he strongly disagrees with his internal policy. More precisely, he accused the “system” of favoring corruption and oligarchy.
- 8) Despite those criticisms, Mr Alizade underlined that he *“cannot complain of any restriction to his campaign and to his freedom of speech”.*
- 9) We observed that the Social Democrat Party of Mr Alizade has very few financial and human means. Mr Alizade described himself as *“the only leftists candidate, the candidate of the retired and the poors...”*
- 10) Meeting Mr Hasanli at the New Musawat Party (which endorsed his candidature), we observed that this candidate (often presented as the key opposition candidate) has very important human resources as the party offices were full of young and very lively activists. None of them showed any sign of fear or seemed to worry about retaliation
- 11) Mr Hasanli was, from afar, the most critical of President Aliyev but also of the other opposition candidates. He told us that *“most of the other so-called opposition candidates are not genuine opponents but are there to undermine my position. They play the game of the power and are fake candidates...”*
- 12) Mr Hassanli complained that he was *“under permanent surveillance and huge pressure, often insulted and threatened”.* He told us he could be *“arrested or even killed at any moment...”*.

III. Freedom of the press in the democratic countries

In western democracies the concept of freedom of speech and especially when it comes to the press and the media is not an absolute and universal one although guaranteed and promoted in many constitutions. The most famous text is undoubtedly the First Amendment to the United States Constitution: “*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievance.*” The text seems unambiguous and without restriction nevertheless along the recent history of the United States many cases and issues raised where freedom of the press has to be regulated especially when it comes to national security. What concerns the world’s biggest democracy is also true when it comes to other European and Western countries that face the same dilemma, guaranteeing the Freedom of the Press or protecting national security. Beyond the rhetorical or ethical debate that lays in such opposition it seems more appropriate to underline recent examples of journalists being prosecuted or interrogated because of their work, methods and contacts.

- In Spain after 7 years of prosecution 5 journalists of the Basque-language daily *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* suspected of having links with the terrorists organization ETA were free of all charges in 2010. To recall in February 2003 Spanish civil guards arrested 13 journalists and the national court judge ordered the closure of *Euskaldunon Egunkaria*. Judicial authorities believed that the newspaper was a front organization offering direct support to the ETA terrorist group but failed to prove it. Spain was at the time largely criticized by journalists associations and human rights groups who denounced the length of the 7 years prosecution and the shut down of the daily newspaper.
- Most recently, on September 30, 2013 a German journalist, Ilja Trojanow, was denied access to the United States as he was about to fly from Salvador de Bahia to Miami. The journalist was supposed to participate in a conference held in the state of Colorado. Ilja Trojanow said that US authorities also refused to justify its refusal of letting him enter its territory but it appears to be

due to the very critical views of the journalists on the US surveillance program. He indeed freshly cosigned a letter in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung asking Angela Merkel to take sanction to protest against the US intelligence policy in Germany.

- On September 2013, the investigative journalist Barret Brown, received a gag order forbidding him and his lawyers to make any statements about his trial. To recall the American journalist Barret Brown was arrested on September 2012 by the FBI. He was investigating on the links between private intelligence companies and the government. Brown faces numerous charges including obstruction, making threats, conspiracy, retaliation against a law enforcement official and disseminating stolen information and could face up to 105 years in prison. His trial should begin in April 2014.
- On May 2013 the US Department of Justice informed Associated Press that it has seized the record of calls from AP phone lines in different offices of the country. The DOJ declared that the seizure of phone records was necessary to identify the source that informed the AP about a CIA operation which details were revealed on May 7, 2012. AP President and CEO Gary Pruitt severely condemned the Department of Justice declaring that “The DOJ's actions could not have been more tailor-made to comfort authoritarian regimes that want to suppress their own news media⁷”. Besides Pruitt also said that such actions are not only made to intimidate the Associated Press and the media in general but are also meant at threatening every potential sources willing to cooperate with journalists.
- In August 2012 a freelance journalist working for the New York Times, Robert Stolarik, was violently arrested as he was taking photos during the Occupy Wall Street Protests in New York City. “*Mr. Stolarik was taking photographs of the arrest of a teenage girl about 10:30 p.m., when a police officer instructed him to stop doing so. Mr. Stolarik said he identified himself as a journalist for The Times and continued taking pictures. A second officer*

⁷ KERR C. Jennifer, AP President Pruitt accuses DOJ of rule violations in phone records case; source intimidation, www.ap.org June 19,2013

appeared, grabbed his camera and “slammed” it into his face, he said. Mr. Stolarik said he asked for the officers’ badge numbers, and the officers then took his cameras and dragged him to the ground; he said that he was kicked in the back and that he received scrapes and bruises to his arms, legs and face⁸.” Besides the New York Times also accused via its lawyer that the New York Police Department also prevented journalists from doing their work and to properly cover the protests: “George Freeman, a lawyer for *The Times*, said the episode was “especially distressing” because the newspaper had been working with the Police Department since the Occupy Wall Street protests last fall, in which some journalists were denied access to certain areas or were arrested, to find ways to prevent the police from interfering with journalists in the course of their work⁹.”

- In France in September 2013 a journalist from *Le Monde*, Gérard Davet was informed that he has been wiretapped during a month in 2009. The internal affairs of the French national police were investigating on a leak of information during the investigation and the judicial proceedings of a crime that occurred in 2006. Gérard Davet was indeed covering the case of the assassination of a French Jewish citizen who was kidnapped, tortured and killed by a criminal gang. The journalist refused to reveal his sources to the police which eventually lead to the wiretapping. Gérard Davet wants to fill a complaint.
- In August 2013, David Miranda the boyfriend of Glenn Greenwald, a journalist of *The Guardian* covering and echoing the Edward Snowden revelations, was detained and interrogated during 9 hours at Heathrow airport under the Terrorism Act. *The Guardian* firmly condemned this detention qualified as “unlawful”: “There is no suggestion that Miranda is a terrorist, or that his detention and questioning at Heathrow was for any other reason than his involvement in his partner Glenn Greenwald's reporting of the Edward Snowden story. The state has not even hinted there is a justification beyond that involvement. While there may be relevant facts of which I know nothing, it is reasonable to proceed on the basis that was the reason for the powers

⁸ THE NEW YORK TIMES, *Times Photographer Is Arrested on Assignment*, August 5, 2012

⁹ Ibid.

being used. The Terrorism Act defines a terrorist as someone "involved in committing preparing or instigating acts of terrorism". Miranda is plainly not committing or preparing acts of terrorism. Instigate is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as to "bring about or initiate an action or to incite someone to do something". Publication in the Guardian is not instigating terrorism. If it is obvious to the state the person detained is not a terrorist, the state must have some purpose other than determining whether he is a terrorist in using the power – and that would render the use of the power unlawful. The state may wish that journalists would not publish sensitive material, but it is up to journalists, not the state, to decide where to draw the line. If the state contends a person holds information unlawfully there are a range of powers it can use to restrain its use, though they are all subject to legal limitations. The schedule 7 power is not given to restrain the use of information¹⁰."

IV. The Presidential election observation mission – Azerbaijan, 9 October 2013

First of all, we have to declare that the ESISC's mission was particularly impressed by the openness of the relevant authorities (including the Central Elections Commission) and its willingness to collaborate with the international community. It especially acknowledges the effort made to facilitate the work of the hundreds of foreign observers present in Baku for this important occasion.

The 9 members' expert team was organized by ESISC, but involved 7 independent personalities and experts selected on their personal, experience.

The team members were:

- Claude MONIQUET, ESISC CEO, Chief of Mission

¹⁰ FALCONER Charles, The Detention of David Miranda was an unlawful use of the Terrorism Act, *The Guardian*, Wednesday 21 August 2013

- William RACIMORA, ESISC vice-CEO, deputy-Chief of Mission
- Paolo CASACA, former Member of the European Parliament (Socialist), Founder and Executive Director of *ARCHUMANKIND* and of the *South Asia Democratic Forum*, (Portugal)
- Ilan MIZRAHI, former Head of the Israeli *National Security Council* (Israel)
- Gil. L. BOURDOUX, President of the *Centre d'Etude de la Police*, Honorary council of *Standing Police Monitoring Committee* (Belgium)
- Israel FELDMAN, psychiatrist and specialist in victimology, *President of « Israel-France association of victimology »*, *Professor Chair UNESCO/UNITWIN of teaching on violence, Tel Aviv University.* (Israel)
- Thierry COOSEMANS, Phd in political sciences, independent electoral expert, Member of the *Belgian Association of Political Science* (Belgium)
- Simon PETERMANN, doctor in Political sciences, Emeritus Professor of the *Universities of Brussels and Liege*, Expert in Human rights for several international organizations and Judiciary Expert, (Belgium)
- Renaud FRANCOIS, Former French Army Colonel (retired), former Director of Intelligence and Operations cell of the OSCE (Conflict Prevention Center) during the Karabagh war, (France)

The observation mission was organized in strict observance of the relevant international standards (including OSCE and European Union guidelines). Each expert had to visit several Polling office and one or more vote-counting offices.

On Wednesday October 9, all together the team members visited and observed:

- 200 Polling stations, in Baku, Sumgait and rural areas

- 11 vote-counting stations

The visited polling stations included:

- One mobile station for disabled and old isolated persons
- One “special polling station” in a prison (“*Penitentiary center number 11 in Baku*”)
- Two “special polling stations” in military barracks in Baku
- One “special polling station” for displaced persons in Sumgait

The observation was divided into three separate phases:

- 1) Before the vote outside the polling station;
- 2) During the vote inside the polling station;
- 3) During the vote counting inside the vote counting station.

The totality of observers affirmed that their work was easy to carry out and that no intimidation was perpetrated in their regards, hence demonstrating no particular troubles during their mission.

Outside polling stations

In the first phase, the election monitoring team was called to observe and assess the situation outside the voting station before its opening. The team was then asked to answer a questionnaire of 14 questions regarding the general situation of the polling station at the moment of their arrival. These questions were about the location of the polling station, the number of people outside the stations as well as the overall

atmosphere in order to identify any possible presence of irregularities or intimidations before the starting of the vote.

At the question if the polling station was easy to find, the 92.5 percent answered positively. Only 15 out of 200 polling stations visited were described as difficult to find.

Nevertheless, a 40 percent of polling stations were described as “difficult to access by people with disabilities”. This data shows that several polling stations presented structural barriers which impeded, or could have impeded, the access to people with limited mobility.

As for the rest, no evidence of irregularities was found by the election monitoring team. In this regard, neither campaign material nor campaign activities that could have influenced voters were visible outside the polling station. Similarly, no presence of security guards was reported outside the polling stations, which could have been perceived as intimidating by voters.

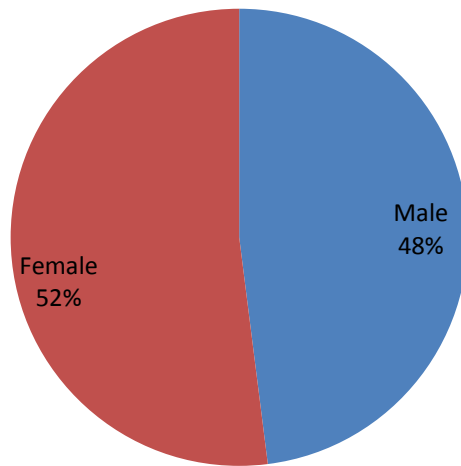
Finally, the totality of observers did not report any particular incident outside the polling stations. In only one case, one woman was reported shouting the name of a candidate.

Inside polling stations

The second phase concerned the situation inside the polling station during the voting process. The observers were asked to assess whether the voting process respected international standards by filling a questionnaire composed of 34 questions. The final result of their assessment confirmed that the voting respected such standards.

All polling stations were opened at 8 am and closed at 7 pm. They were chaired by a balanced mix of women (52 percent) and men (48 percent), whose occupations were mainly that of teachers.

Presidents of polling station

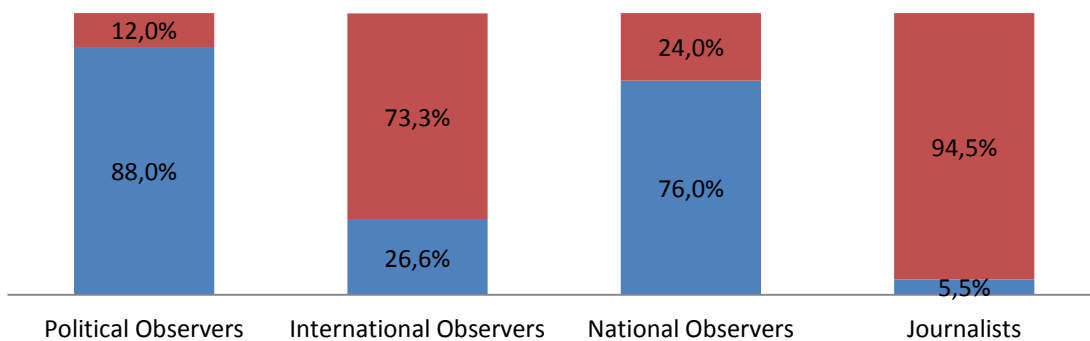


The election monitoring team registered also whether during the voting there were other observers from both national and international missions, as well as the presence of journalists. The team reported that candidate's political observers were present in the 88 percent of polling stations; international observers were present in the 26.6 percent of polling stations; national observers were present in the 76 percent of polling stations; and journalists in 5.5 percent of the polling stations. In addition, the observers reported that no security guard was present inside the polling stations.

Polling Stations

Presence of international and national observers, political observers and journalists

■ Yes ■ No



As concerns the voting, only in two cases the observers registered problems with voters' registration. Similarly, only in two cases voters' names were not correctly checked on the voting roster and only twice the ballots were found with marks that could have led to the identification of voters. For the rest, no other anomalies were witnessed by the observatory mission.

The voting material was considered sufficient and compliant with international standards. The ballot boxes were properly sealed and they always remained visible to the election staff. The booths did allow the voting while respecting the privacy of the voter. No one was found voting outside the booths. In the 98 percent of cases, voters entered the booths one by one. In only four cases, assistance was requested by analphabets. The average time voters spent inside the booth was about 3 minutes per voter. The voting process continued smoothly till the end and only in one case an interruption was necessary for security reasons.

Finally, no particular incident was reported by the observatory team. Only in six cases (3 percent) small agitations by observers were reported.

Vote counting

The work carried out by the election monitoring team during the vote counting was considered "easy" by the totality of the observers. In addition, none of them reported attempts of intimidation on their regard. The mission visited counting stations in Baku, Sumqayit and Buzovna.

The totalities of boxes were stored at the polling station when the vote-counting started. The boxes did not present any alterations and were therefore considered as properly sealed. When the counting started, the boxes were opened in front of all people.

The number of voters was reported on the voting roster; only in one case the number was not present. Similarly, the number of signatures were well visible but in one case. Therefore, the number of ballots was consistent with both the number of voters as well as the number of signatures on the voting roster, with the exceptions noted above.

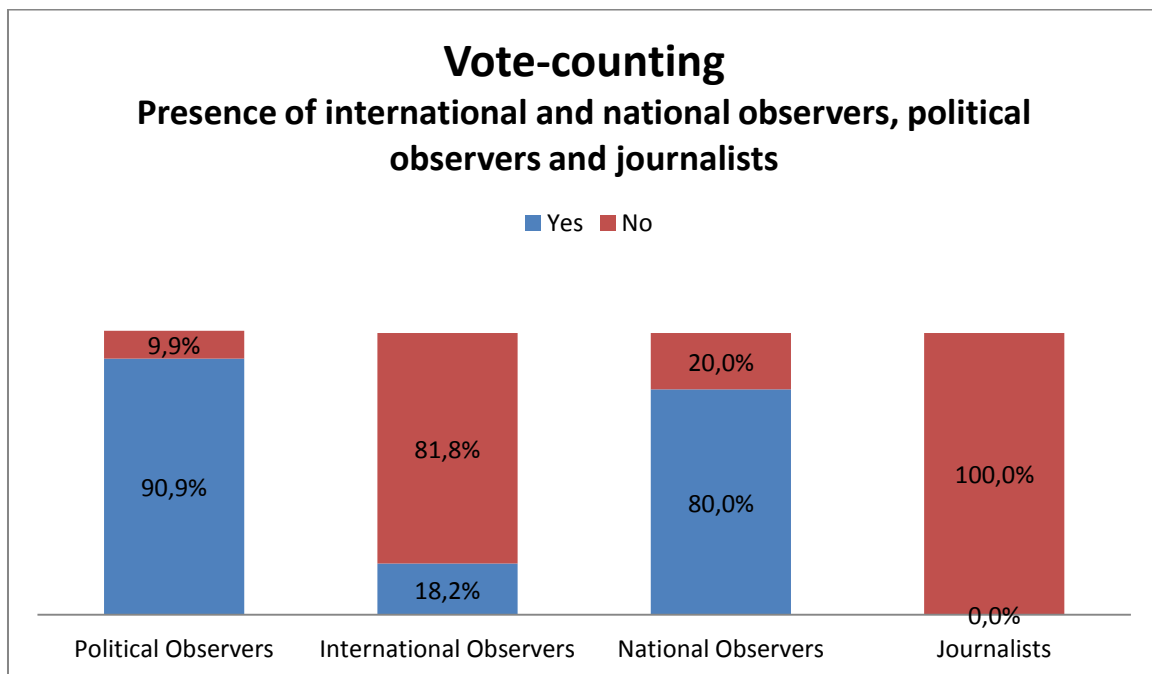
The election monitoring team could testify that:

- The ballots were handled in plain sight of the polling staff.

- The validity and/or invalidity of the ballots were determined in a reasonable manner.
- The ballots were attributed to the correct candidate but in one case.
- The polling staff was in a position to examine the ballots.
- All the members of the commission agreed with the final tallies written on the official report.

The election monitoring team registered also whether during the vote-counting there were other observers from both national and international missions, as well as the presence of journalists. The team reported that candidate's political observers were present in the 90.9 percent of vote-counting stations; international observers were present in the 18.2 percent of vote-counting stations; national observers were present in the 80 percent of vote-counting stations; while no journalist was present at the polling stations. In addition, the observers reported that no security guard was present inside the vote-counting stations.

No attempts of intimidation during the vote-counting were reported. The whole process was carried out without tension. No particular incidents were recorded.



V. Conclusion

In all the polling stations and the counting stations visited by our team members, they observed:

- The large and even prominent participation of women both in local electoral commissions and in the national observers missions: most of members of those group and most of the Presidents of Polling or vote counting stations were highly educated women
- A strict but human respect of the electoral code
- A massive presence of Azerbaijan national observers (members of political parties, NGO's and independent citizen).
- The very large number of young women and men among the voters

In addition, they were also impressed by:

- The fact that voting is allowed in prisons and the way this activity was conducted in a difficult context where tensions and security concerns are a very real concern;
- The fact that this strong will of encouraging an active citizenship and participation even in difficult conditions was also found in the organization of mobile voting facilities for disabled and old isolated persons

In the vote counting offices, they noticed the same strict respect of the law, including the active participation of the national observers. Nevertheless, in one counting office (on the eleven visited), in which a great tension existed between an opposition observer and the President of the office, a possible lack of professionalism provoked a dispute regarding the number of valid ballots. The representative of the opposition announced his willingness to solve the issue in justice courts.

As a conclusion, ESISC Electoral Observation Mission assessed that October 9 elections were conducted with a high level of transparency and a strict respect of international standards.

Even if Azerbaijan is still a country in transition and in stabilization, it satisfied all the due criteria of free, fair and transparent elections.

ANNEXS

- I. POLL MONITORING OF POLLING STATION**
- II. POLL MONITORING OF VOTE-COUNTING STATION**
- III. SYNTHESIS OF POLLING STATION OBSERVATION**
- IV. SYNTHESIS OF VOTE-COUNTING STATION**
- V. PRESS STATEMENT – PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION
OBSERVATION MISSION IN AZERBAIJAN**

ANNEX I

European Strategic Intelligence and Security Center (ESISC)

Election Monitoring Project

Azerbaijan, 9 October 2013

Polling Place Observation Report

A) Observers

Organization: ESISC

Last Name(s), First Name(s):

Accreditation:

Was your work easy: Y / N

If not, explain:

Were you a victim of intimidation: Y / N

If so, explain:

B) Polling Place Observed

Region:

Municipality:

Name or number of polling place:

Polling place:

Normal

Absentee (displaced voters)

Other: (Specify : _____)

C) Observation Period

Arrival time:

Departure time:

D) Observation

ATTENTION: Questions 7 and 18 must be answered at the conclusion of the observation period.

OBSERVATIONS MADE OUTSIDE OF THE POLLING PLACE

1) Was the polling place easy to find? Y / N

2) Was the polling place easy to access? Y / N

3) Is the polling place handicap-accessible: Y / N

4) Are campaign materials visible near the polling place: Y / N

If so, specify for which party:

5) Were campaign activities visible near the polling place : Y / N

If so, specify for which party:

6) Outline the number of people waiting outside of the polling place at the arrival time :

7) Outline the number of people waiting outside of the polling place at the departure time:

8) Were police officers or security guards visible outside of the polling place : Y / N

9) Outline their quantity :

10) Could their attitude be considered intimidating : Y / N

If so, explain:

11) Did you sense tensions outside of the polling place? Y / N

If so, explain:

OBSERVATIONS MADE INSIDE THE POLLING PLACE

- 12) **President of the polling place :** Male Female
- 13) **(If possible) President of the polling place's profession:**
- 14) **Opening hour for the polling place:**
- 15) **Closing hour for the polling place:**
- 16) **Number of voters:**
- 17) **Who had already voted when the observation team arrived
(number):**
- 18) **Who voted when the team was present (number):**
- 19) **Assessment officials or members of the Electoral
Commission:**
- Quantity:
- Number of women:
- Number of men:
- 20) **Presence of candidates' political observers: Y / N**
- If so, which?
- 21) **Were other international observers present during
your session? Y / N**
- 22) **Were national observers present during your sessions? Y / N**
- 23) **Were journalists present during your session? Y / N**
- 24) **Were campaign materials visible INSIDE of the polling place :**
Y / N
- If so, specify for which party:
- 25) **Were campaign materials visible INSIDE of the polling place :**
Y / N
- If so, specify for which party:

26) Were police officers or security guards visible INSIDE of the polling place : Y / N

27) Outline their quantity :

28) Could their attitude be considered intimidating : Y / N

If so, explain :

29) Did you sense tensions INSIDE of the polling place? Y / N

If so, explain :

30) Were the instructions provided for/available to the voters correct and thorough? Y / N

If not, explain :

31) Did you observe any problems related to voter identification? Y / N

If so, explain:

32) Did you observe any problems related to voter registration? Y / N

If so, explain:

33) Were the names of the voters correctly checked on the voting roster BEFORE and/or AFTER their votes were cast? Y / N

34) Were the ballots signed/annotated (or marked in some way as to identify the voter)? Y / N

35) Were the voting materials sufficient and appropriate? Y / N

36) Were the voting booths private? Y / N

37) How many voting booths were in the polling place?

38) Did individuals vote outside of the voting booths? Y / N

39) Did you observe the presence of several voters in one voting booth? Y / N

40) Did you observe any problems related to the assistance provided to blind, handicapped or illiterate voters? Y / N

41) Was the ballot box correctly sealed? Y / N

42) Was the ballot box visible to the commission (election staff)?
Y / N

43) How long did it take the average person to vote?

44) Was the balloting interrupted one or more times during your session ? Y / N

If yes, explain :

45) Did you witness any proxy votes? Y / N

If so, how many?

46) In your presence, was anyone denied the right to vote?

If so, for what reason:

47) Did you witness any notable incidents? If so, which?

48) Did you report these incidents? If so, which?

Overall evaluation of the polling place :

Very Good Good Satisfactory Poor Very Poor

We appreciate your completing each form on-site and/or writing your specific comments before proceeding to the next polling place

Specific Comments :

Signature of Observer

ANNEX II

European Strategic Intelligence and Security Center (ESISC)

Election Monitoring Project

Azerbaïdjan, 9 October 2013

Observation Report of Vote-Counting Procedures

1) Observers

Organization : ESISC

Last Name(s), First Name(s) :

Accreditation :

Was your work easy : Y / N

If not, explain:

Were you a victim of intimidation: Y / N

If so, explain:

2) Polling Place Observed

Region:

Municipality:

Name or number of polling place:

3) Observation Period

Arrival Time:

Departure Time:

4) Observation

- **Individual who presides over the procedure:** Male Female
- **(If possible) said individual's profession:**
- **Time the vote-counting started:**
- **Election officials or members of the Election Commission :**

Quantity:

Number of women:

Number of men:

49) Presence of candidates' political observers: Y / N

If so, which?

**50) Were other international observers present during
your session? Y / N**

If so, which organizations/institutions:

51) Were national observers present during your sessions? Y / N

If so, which?

52) Were journalists present during your session? Y / N

**53) Were police officers or security guards visible INSIDE of the
polling place : Y / N**

54) Outline their quantity :

55) Could their attitude be considered intimidating : Y / N

If so, explain :

56) Did you sense tensions INSIDE of the polling place? Y / N

If so, explain :

BEFORE THE OPENING OF THE BALLOT BOXES

- **Where were the boxes stored before the vote-counting started?**
- **Were the boxes properly sealed before they were opened?**
- **Were the boxes opened in plain sight/in front of everyone?**

AFTER THE OPENING OF THE BALLOT BOXES

- **Was the number of voters on the voting roster established? Y / N**
- **Was the number of signatures on the voting roster counted? Y/N**
- **Was the number of ballots present in the ballot box consistent with the two numbers mentioned above? Y / N**

If not, explain:

- **Were all of the ballots handled in plain sight/in front of everyone? Y / N**

If not, explain:

- **Was the validity and/or invalidity of the ballots determined in a reasonable manner? Y/N**

If not, explain:

- **Were all of the ballots attributed to the correct candidate? Y / N**
- **Was all of the polling place staff in a position to examine the ballots? Y/ N**
- **Did those conducting the vote-counting procedure package and seal the votes separately for each candidate? Y / N**
- **Did all of the members of the commission agree with the final tallies written on the official report? Y / N**

If not, explain:

- **Did any of the members of the commission or of the poll staff refuse to sign the official report? Y / N**

If so, which individuals?

If so, why?

- **Did all of the authorized individuals receive a copy of the official report (those who requested a copy)? Y/ N**
- **Did you witness any notable incidents? If so, which?**

- **Did you report these notable incidents? If so, which?**

Overall evaluation of the polling place :

Very Good Good Satisfactory Poor Very Poor

We appreciate your completing each form on-site and/or writing your specific comments before proceeding to the next polling place

Specific Comments :

Signature of Observer

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**ANNEX 3
SYNTHESIS OF POLLING STATION OBSERVATION**

	Observer 1	Observer 2	Observer 3	Observer 4	Observer 5	Observer 6	Observer 7	Observer 8	Observer 9	
	N = 18	N=27	N =24	N =25	N =26	N = 27	N =17	N =20	N =16	TOTAL =200
Observations made outside of the polling place										
Was your work easy?	Yes = 18	Yes = 27	Yes= 24	Yes= 25	Yes=26	Yes=27	Yes=17	Yes=20	Yes=16	
Were you a victim of intimidation?	No = 18	No = 27	No = 24	No=25	N=26	No=27	No=17	No=20	No=16	
Region or municipality	Baku = 18	Sumqayit=27	Sumqayit= 24	Baku=25	Sumqayit=26	Baku=27	Baku=17	Sayli menteqe 20	Baku=16	
Was the polling place easy to find?	Yes =18	Yes = 27	Yes= 18 No = 6	Yes= 25	Yes=26	Yes=22 No=5	Yes=16 No=1	Yes=19 No=1	Yes=15 No=1	
Was the polling place easy to access?	Yes = 18	Yes= 27	Yes=24	yes=25	Yes=26	Yes=26 No=1	Yes=17	Yes=20	Yes=16	
Is the polling place handicap accessible?	Yes = 8 No = 10	Yes = 2 No= 25	Yes=13 No= 11	Yes=9 No=16	Yes=25 No=1	Yes=25 No=2	Yes=16 No=1	Yes=19 No=1	Yes=3 No=13	
Were campaign activities visible near the polling place?	No = 18	No = 27	No= 24	No=25	No=26	No=27	No=17	No=20	No=16	
Number of people waiting outside the polling place at the arrival time	Min = 0 Max = 10	Min = 0 Max = 10	Min=0 Max=10	Min=0 Max=15	Min=0 Max=12	Min=0 Max=15	Min=10 Max= 200(soldats)	Min=0 Max=20	Min=0 Max=16	
Outline the number of people waiting outside of the polling place at t	Min = 0 Max = 7	Min = 0 Max = 16	Min=0 Max= 30	Min=0 Max=20	Min=0 Max=2	Min=0 Max=15	Min=3 Max=300 (soldats)	Min=0 Max=100	Min=0 Max=7	
Were police officers or security guards visible outside the polling stati	No = 18	No = 27	No= 23 Yes= 1	No=25	No=24 Yes=2	No=27	No= 16 Yes=1	No=9 Yes=11	No=15 Yes=1	
Outline their quantity			undetermined policemen coming for vote		1		300 soldiers coming for vote	2 or 3	19-20	
Could their attitud be considered intimidating			No		No		No	No	No	
Did you sense tensions outside of the polling place?	No=18	No=27	No=24	No=25	No=26	No=27	Yes= 1 No= 16	No=20	No=16	
Observations made inside of the polling place										
President of the polling place Male or Female?	M = 1 F = 17	M = 13 F = 14	M=10 F=14	M=13 F=12	M=18 F= 8	M=15 F=12	M=12 F=5	M=3 F=17	M=11 F=5	
President of the polling place's profession If the information is known	Teachers 16, engineer 1, assissant of direction, 1	Teacher= 18 engineer= 4	businessman=1	Teacher=18 engineer=4	Teacher=20 engineer=2	Teacher=23 engineer=2	Teacher=12 Doctor=4	Teacher=20	Teacher=6 ingineer=3	
Opening hour for the polling place	08h = 18	8h= 27	8h= 24	8h=25	8h=26	8h=27	8h=17	8h=20	8h=16	
Closing hour fort the polling place	19h = 18	19h=27	19h=24	19h=25	19h=26	19h=27	19h=17	19h=20	19h=16	
Number of voters	Min = 1164 Max = 1482	Min=1004 Max= 1375	Min=982 Max=1390	Min=594 Max=1461	Min=1110 Max=1443	Min=1082 Max=1500	Min=1180 Max=1476	Min=804 Max=1486	Min=507 Max=1478	
Who had already voted when the observation team arrived (number)	Min = 8 Max = 680	Min=0 Max=709	Min=0 Max=700	Min=17 Max=700	Min=10 Max=40	Min=30 Max=973	Min=30 Max=950	Min=25 Max=920	Min=15 Max=842	
Who voted when the team was present (number)?	MIN = 8 MAX = 70	Min=3 Max=50	Min=3 Max=20	Min=2 Max=20	Min=6 Max=40	Min=2 Max=25	Min=2 Max=20	Min=25 Max=15	Min=2 Max=51	
Presence of candidates' political observers?	Yes = 14 No = 4	Yes=27	Yes=24	Yes=24 No=1	Yes=26	Yes=26 No=1	Yes=11 No=6	Yes=20	Yes=4 No=12	
Were other international observers present during your session?	Yes = 3 No = 15	Yes=0 No=27	Yes=2 No=22	Yes=4 No=21	Yes= 18 No=8	Yes=10 No=17	Yes=11 No=6	Yes= 0 No= 20	Yes=0 No=16	
Were national observers during your session?	Yes = 9 No = 9	Yes=26 No=1	Yes=5 No=19	Yes=23 No=2	Yes=26	Yes=26 No=1	Yes=17	Yes=20	Yes= 0 No=16	
Were journalists present during your session	Yes = 3 No = 15	Yes = 3 No=24	No=24	Yes=3 No=22	Yes= 0 No=26	Yes= 0 No=27	Yes=2 No=15	Yes= 0 No=20	Yes= 0 No=16	

Were campaign materials visible inside of the polling place?	No = 18	No=27	No=24	No=25	No=26	No=27	No=17	No=20	No=16	
Were police officers or security guards visible inside of the polling place?	No = 18	No=27	No=24	No=25	No=26	No=27	No=17	No=20	No=16	
Outline their quantity										
Could their attitude be considered intimidating?										
Did you sense tensions inside of the polling place?	No = 18	No= 26 Yes=1	No=22 Yes=2	No=25	No=26	No=27	No=16 Yes=1	No= 20	No=15 Yes=1	
Were the instructions provided for/available to the voters correct and thorough?	Yes = 18	Yes=27	Yes=24	Yes=25	Yes=26	Yes=27	Yes=17	Yes=20	Yes=14 No=2	
Did you observe any problems related to voter identification?	Yes = 2 No = 16	No=27	No=24	No=25	No=26	No=27	No=17	No=20	No=16	
Did you observe any problems related to voter registration?	Yes = 2 No = 16	No=27	No=24	No=25	No=26	No=27	No=17	No=20	No=16	
Where the names of the voters correctly checked on the voting roster before and/or after their vote were cast?	Yes = 18	Yes=27	Yes= 24	Yes=25	Yes=26	Yes=25	Yes=17	Yes=20	Yes=16	No=2
Were the ballots signed/annotated or marked in some way as to identify the voter?	No = 18	No=25 Yes=2	No=24	No=25	No=26	No=27	No=17	No=20	No=16	
Were the voting materials sufficient and appropriate?	Yes = 18	Yes=27	Yes=24	Yes=25	Yes=26	Yes=27	Yes=17	Yes=20	Yes=16	
Were the voting booths private?	Yes = 18	Yes=27	Yes=24	Yes=25	Yes=26	Yes=27	Yes=17	Yes=20	Yes=16	
How many voting booths were in the polling place?	17 x 8 vot. Bo 1 x 6 vot. Bo	24 x 8 vot. Bo 3 x 6 vot. Bo	20x8 2x12 1x6 1x10	17x8 2x6 1x4 5x10	26x8	25x8 1x10 1x12	15x12 1x8 1x9	18x8 2x6	1x6 9x8 5x10 1x12	
Did individuals vote outside of the voting booths?	No = 18	No=27	No=24	No=25	No=26	No=27	No=17	No= 20		
Did you observe the presence of several voters in one voting booth?	No = 18	No= 27	No= 20 Yes= 4 : helping old pers.	No=25	No=26	No=25	No=17	No=20	No= 16	Yes=2
Did you observe any problems related to the assistance provided to be handicapped or illiterate voters?	No = 18	No=27	No=24	No=25	No=26	No=27	No=17	No=20	No=16	
Was the ballot box correctly sealed?	Yes = 18	Yes=27	Yes=24	Yes=25	Yes=26	Yes=27	Yes=17	Yes=20	Yes=16	
Was the ballot box visible to the election staff?	Yes = 18	Yes= 27		Yes=25	Yes=26	Yes=27	Yes=17	Yes=20	Yes=16	
How long did it take the average person to vote?	2 min or less 18	3 min or less 27	1 min 24	2 min or less 25	3 min or less 26	2 min or less 27	5 min or less 17	3 min or less 20	3 min or less 16	
Was the balloting interrupted one or more times during your session?	No = 18	No=27	No=24	No=25	No=26	No=27	No=17	No=20	No=15 Yes=1 (security reason)	
Did you witness any proxy votes?	No = 18	No=27	No=24	No=25	No=26	No=27	No=17	No=20	No=16	
In your presence, was anyone denied the right to vote?	Yes = 2 No = 16	Yes= 0 No= 27	Yes= 0 No= 24	Yes= 0 No= 25	Yes= 0 No= 26	No=27	No=17	No=20	No=16	
Did you witness any notable incidents? If so, which	Yes= 0 No= 18	Yes=1 No= 26	Yes= 2 No= 24	Yes=2 No= 23	Yes= 0 No=26	No=27	No=16 Yes=1	No=20	No=16	
		agitation from Hassanli observer	agitation from Hassanli observer	agitation from hassanli observer			argument between voters about the President Aliev			

a woman wasn't authorized to vote for her old mother

ANNEX 4
SYNTHESIS OF VOTE-COUNTING STATION

Question	Observer 1	Observer 2	Observer 3	Observer 4	Observer 5	Observer 6	Observer 7	Observer 8	Observer 9	
	N = 0	N = 1	N = 1	N = 1	N = 3	N = 2	N = 1	N = 1	N = 1	TOTAL = 11
Was your work easy?		Yes	yes	yes	Yes = 3	Yes = 2	yes	yes	yes	
Were you a victim of intimidation?		No	no	no	No = 3	No = 2	no	no	no	
Region or municipality		Sumqayit	Sumqayit	Baku	Sumqayit	Baku	Baku	Buzovna	Baku	
Before the opening of the ballots boxes										
Where were the boxes stored before the vote-counting started?		Polling station	Polling station	Polling station	Polling station	Polling station	Polling station	Polling station	Polling station	
Were the boxes properly sealed before they were opened		Yes	Yes	yes	Yes = 3	Yes = 2	yes	yes	yes	
Were the boxes opened in plain sight/in front of everyone?		Yes	Yes	yes	Yes = 3	Yes = 2	yes	yes	yes	
After the opening of the ballot boxes										
Was the number of voters on the voting roster established?		Yes	Yes	yes	Yes = 3	Yes = 2	yes	no	yes	
Was the number of signatures on the voting roster counted?		Yes	Yes	yes	Yes = 3	Yes = 2	yes	no	No	
Was the number of ballots present in the ballot box consistent with the two numbers mentioned above?		Yes	Yes	yes	Yes = 3	Yes = 2	yes	/	yes	
Were all of the ballots handled in plain sight/in front of everyone?		Yes	Yes	yes	Yes = 3	Yes = 2	yes	yes	yes	
Was the validity and/or invalidity of the ballots determined in a reasonable manner?		Yes	Yes	yes	Yes = 3	Yes = 2	yes	yes	yes	
Were all the ballots attributed to the correct candidate?		Yes	Yes	yes	Yes = 2 No = 1	Yes = 2	yes	yes	yes	
Was all of the polling staff in a position to examine the ballots?		Yes	Yes	yes	Yes = 3	Yes = 2	yes	yes	yes	
Did those conducting the vote-counting procedure package and seal the votes separately for each candidate?		Yes	Yes	yes	Yes = 3	Yes = 2	Yes	no	/	
Did all the members of commission agree with the final tallies written on the official report?		Yes	Yes	yes	Yes = 3	Yes = 2	yes	yes	/	
Did any of the members of the commission or of the poll staff refuse to sign the official report?		No	No	no	No = 3	No = 2	no	no	no	
Observations										
Individual who presides over the procedure?		Female	Male	Male	Female = 2 Male = 1	Male = 1 Female = 1	Male	Male	Female	
His/her individual's profession?		Teacher	Unknown	Engineer	Teacher = 2 Unknown = 1	Teacher = 1 Unknown = 1	Teacher	Director of cultural center	/	

Elections officials or members of the Election Commission										
Quantity?		5	6	6	6 = 3	6 = 2	6	6	/	
Number of women?		3	3	4	4 / 6 / 2 / 4	2 / 4	3	2	/	
Number of men		2	3	2	2 / 0 / 4 / 2	4 / 2	3	4	/	
Presence of candidates political observers?		Yes	Yes	yes	Yes = 3	Yes = 2	no	yes	yes	
Presence of other international observer?		Yes	No	yes	No = 3	No = 2	no	no	no	
Presence of national observers?		No	Yes	yes	Yes = 3	Yes = 1 No = 1	yes	yes	/	
Presence of journalists?		No	No	no	No = 3	No = 2	no	no	no	
Presence of police officers or security guards?		No	No	no	No = 3	No = 2	no	no	no	
Outline their quantity		/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	
Could their attitude be considered intimidating?		no	/	no	No = 3	No = 2	/	no	no	
Did you sense tensions?		No	No	yes	No = 3	No = 2	no	no	no	
Did all of the authorized individuals receive a copy of the official report (those who requested a copy)		Yes	Yes	/	Yes = 3	Yes = 2	yes	yes	/	
Did you witness any notable incidents?		No	No	Yes	No = 3	No = 2	no	yes	/	
Did you report these notable incidents?		/	No	No	No = 3	No = 2	no	/	yes	



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Press Statement

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION IN AZERBAIJAN

As announced earlier, ESISC conducted an independent observation mission in Azerbaijan for October 9 Presidential elections.

The 9 members expert team was organized by ESISC, but involved 7 independent personalities and experts selected on their personal, experience.

The team members were:

- **Claude MONIQUET**, ESISC CEO, Chief of Mission
- **William RACIMORA**, ESISC vice-CEO, deputy-Chief of Mission
- **Paolo CASACA**, former Member of the European Parliament (Socialist), Founder and Executive Director of *ARCHUMANKIND* and of the *South Asia Democratic Forum*, (Portugal)
- **Ilan MIZRAHI**, former Head of the *Israeli National Security Council* (Israel)
- **Gil. L. BOURDOUX**, President of the *Centre d'Etudes de la Police*, Honorary Council of *Standing Police Monitoring Committee* (Belgium)
- **Israel FELDMAN**, psychiatrist and specialist in victimology, *President of « Israel-France association of victimology », Professor Chair UNESCO/UNITWIN of teaching on violence, Tel Aviv University.* (Israel)
- **Thierry COOSEMANS**, PhD in political science, **independent electoral expert**; member of the Belgian Association of Political Science, (Belgium)
- **Simon PETERMANN**, doctor in Political sciences, Emeritus Professor of the *Universities of Brussels and Liege*; Expert in Human rights for several international organizations and Judiciary Expert, (Belgium)
- **Renaud FRANCOIS**, Former French Army Colonel (retired), former **Director of Intelligence and Operations cell of the OSCE (Conflict Prevention Center) during the Karabagh war**, (France)

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The observation mission was organized in **strict observance of the relevant international standards (including OSCE and European Union guidelines)**. Each expert had to visit several Polling stations and one or more vote-counting stations.

The observation mission was preceded by **three pre-electoral missions** realized on the field by **Claude MONIQUET** and **William RACIMORA**. In those missions the two ESISC experts met NGO's members, diplomats, local journalists and several candidates from the opposition including Mr Jamil HASANLI, main challenger of the incumbent President.

On **Wednesday October 9**, all together **the team members visited and observed:**

- **200 Polling stations, in Baku, Sumgait and rural areas**
- **11 vote-counting stations**

The visited polling offices included:

- **One mobile station for disabled persons**
- **One "special polling station" in at the "Penitentiary center number 11 in Baku"**
- **Two "special polling stations" in military barracks in Baku**
- **One "special polling station" for displaced persons in Sumgait**

Some of those polling stations were observed at different moments by different members of the team.

In all the polling stations they visited, **they observed** (and were particularly impressed by):

- **The large and even prominent participation of women** both in local electoral commissions and in the national observers missions
- **A strict but human respect of the electoral code**
- **A massive presence of Azerbaijan national observers** (members of political parties, NGO's and independent citizen)
- **The very large number of young women and men** among the voters

In addition, **they were also impressed by:**

- The fact that voting is allowed in prisons and the way this activity was conducted in a difficult context where security concerns are real;
- The fact that this strong will of encouraging an active citizenship and participation even in difficult conditions was also found in the organization of mobile voting facilities for disabled persons

In the vote counting offices, they noticed the same strict respect of the law, including the active participation of the national observers.

Nevertheless, in one counting office (on the eleven visited), in which a great tension existed between an opposition observer and the President of the office, a possible lack of professionalism provoked a dispute regarding the number of valid ballots. The representative of the opposition announced his willingness to solve the issue in justice courts.

As a conclusion, ESISC Electoral Observation Mission assessed that October 9 elections were conducted with a **high level of transparency and a strict respect of international standards.**

Even if Azerbaijan is still a country in transition and in stabilization, **it satisfied all the due criteria of free, fair and transparent elections.**

ESISC was particularly impressed by the openness of the relevant authorities (including the Central Elections Commission) and its willingness to collaborate with the international community. It especially acknowledges the effort made to facilitate the work of the hundreds of foreign observers present in Baku for this important occasion.

Baku, October 10, 2003



Claude MONIQUET



William RACIMORA



Paolo CASACA



Ilan MIZRAHI



Gil L. BOURDOUX



Israel FELDMAN



Thierry COOSEMANS



Simon PETERMANN



Renaud FRANCOIS