

**Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Freedoms of Peaceful Assembly
and Association, with Emphasis on Freedom of Association**

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Peaceful Assembly and Association in Azerbaijan

After re-gaining independency Azerbaijan was enshrined rights of peaceful assembly and association.

International organizations confirm that law on peaceful assembly appropriates to modern European standards. In 2008 after amendments on the law coordinated with Council of Europe Venice Commission, the Commission highly appreciated and called positive changes. Secretary of Venice Commission of CoE: Venice Commission considers satisfactory law on "Freedom on peaceful assembly". OSCE Baku office declared that in the preparation of the law there were taken into account proposals of OSCE and term of peaceful assembly. Thus, the law was adopted coordinated with European Institution and appropriate democratic standards. According to the law rallies will be held in the very places which relevant Executive Power of Azerbaijan will determine. The opposition is able to organize any time the rallies freely in the very places Executive Power of Azerbaijan determined. Which does European country have liberal approach to anarchist groups committed disorders and confrontations? Why is this required from Azerbaijan?

In Azerbaijan there are provided all opportunities for peaceful assembly and association. This year opposition held several rallies with the consent of Executive Power of Baku. During the rallies there were not any obstacles, on the contrary, official Baku declared that they highly appreciate to be held sanctioned rallies by Azerbaijani opposition. Because our point of view is that opposition has to hold rallies according to the law. The government has to create appropriate opportunity to provide peaceful assembly and association, freedom of expression. But unfortunately, because of a small number of citizens at the rallies of oppositions, compelled them to get back the tactics of illegal, unsanctioned rallies in parks, gardens.

Some journalists or chairs of NGO is not involved for their profession and political activity as claimed by some international organizations. Declared charges determined based on test materials and proofs presented to Ministry of Taxes and Ministry of Finance based on the decision of court. They are charged on criminal code's article swindle, illegal business, evasion from payment of taxes, fake of official documents, great deal bribery and other articles. Criminal does not recognize a profession. Generally, within the process of investigation or decision to require exemption them by some international organization, it can be valued as pressure on law-enforcement bodies of Azerbaijan

I would like to tell in short about amendments on legislation concerning NGO-s in Azerbaijan. The accepted laws are in the frame of commitment that Azerbaijan made under international organization. Azerbaijan was based on experience of leading countries in some changes in legislation. I would like to mention that there was held discussion with experts working on human rights, democracy and other fields, chairs of organizations, representatives from Parliament and Ministry of Justice concerning on changes in NGO legislation in Azerbaijan..

In general changes on NGO legislation will provide NGOs to be transparent and responsible towards their work. For example, NGO-s hold neither annual meeting, nor report activity. Law demands to do it open and transparent. Amendments on legislation addressed to increase quantity the mechanisms. Another issue: how non registered NGO-s could be financed? They have no bank account. Then, how do money transfer? where are their reports? How does NGO finance if it has not any grant agreement with donor?

Therefore, amendments on NGO legislation serve to enhance transparent activity of NGO-s, social control, accountability, increasing of responsibility and efficiency.

This year in January Parliament accepted law on "Public participation". According to this law in all state bodies there will be created public councils that will consist of different experts from civil society, journalist organizations, private sectors.

At the same time in State Support Council was created law and monitoring group with initiative of NGOs and their participations in order to learn supposed influence of laws.

For Republic of Azerbaijan freedom of speech, expressions and information is one of the democratic achievements. Azerbaijani government is determined to implement further commitments concerning development of democracy.

Thank you for your attention!