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ENGLISH only

**Statement
at the 574th meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council
October 27, 2005**

Mr. Chairman,

As it is known, the next Parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan will take place on November 6. Today I would like to inform you of the current status of preparations for this important event and the most recent developments in this field.

The Central Election Commission has issued updated lists of voters, which indicate *inter alia* the voters' addresses.

As of October 25, the Commission has registered 8 705 domestic observers and 401 foreign observers, who will participate in the election monitoring process. The registration of observers has not been completed, and the total number of both domestic and foreign observers is expected to further increase.

As of October 25, the Commission has also accredited 130 foreign reporters who arrived in Azerbaijan to cover the election-related developments for international media.

By October 26 the Ministry of Communications and Information Technologies has provided all polling stations with the telephone communication. I want to remind that more than 4 500 polling stations will be opened in Azerbaijan on the election day, and many of them are located in remote rural and mountainous areas.

On October 25 the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan held a meeting with the representatives of relevant Government institutions and local bodies of executive power. The meeting was dedicated to various election-related issues. In his remarks made during this meeting President Aliyev once again emphasized the vital importance of the Parliamentary elections in the overall process of democratic reforms and institution-building in Azerbaijan. The President reaffirmed strong and clear commitment of the Government of

Azerbaijan to ensure the conduct of elections in a democratic manner. President Aliyev expressed satisfaction with the active interest of the people to the elections and participation of the candidates in the electoral campaign, which is proceeding in the open and positive manner. The President took good note of measures taken by the Government institutions and local authorities in the context of preparation for elections, but stressed the need to focus the efforts on solving several outstanding issues of concern in the short time left.

In this connection on October 25 the President of Azerbaijan signed the Executive Order on *Urgent Measures related to Preparation and Conduct of Elections to the Milli Majlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan*. Since my Delegation has already distributed the text of the Executive Order here in the OSCE under reference number SEC.DEL/255/05, today I would only like to mention the major provisions of this document.

In this Executive Order the President suggested to the Parliament to consider lifting the ban on observation of presidential, parliamentary and municipal elections, conducted in the Republic of Azerbaijan, by the NGOs, which have a share in their statutory capitals that is provided by a foreign physical or a foreign juridical person and that exceeds the 30 percent of these capitals, or financed in other ways, stipulated in the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan *On non-Governmental Organizations*.

Furthermore, the Executive Order recommended the Central Election Commission to elaborate and adopt the relevant instruction on marking the fingers of voters by invisible ink when voters receive the ballots on the voting day. Today I want to inform the Permanent Council that at its regular session on October 26 the Central Election Commission agreed with this particular recommendation and will elaborate the technical modalities at the soonest.

The Executive Order also focuses on such issues as consideration of complaints, ensuring the freedom of assembly and issue of the ID cards.

Mr. Chairman,

The Executive Order issued by the President of Azerbaijan two days ago serves as another clear evidence of the commitment and political will of the Government of our country to hold the Parliamentary elections in a democratic manner, on the basis of norms of national legislation and relevant international standards. We appreciate the constant interest shown by our foreign partners, including those from the OSCE community, to the electoral developments in Azerbaijan. We count on their constructive and timely assistance and support to the steps undertaken by the Republic of Azerbaijan in this field.

Thank you.