

Austrian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

**Permanent Council No. 593
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EU Statement on Azerbaijan

1. The European Union welcomes the announcement made on the 2nd of February by the distinguished Azerbaijani Representative that the invitation to send observers to the November 6th Parliamentary elections is also valid for the rerun in ten constituencies on May 13th. The European Union is also pleased to note that, in line with its call to investigate complaints and to take appropriate action, the Central Election Commission and the Constitutional Court have cancelled results in the mentioned constituencies where repeat elections will be held. This will give the Azerbaijani Government the opportunity to partially redress the shortcomings observed during the November 6 Parliamentary Elections, which, although showing some improvement over previous elections in some respects during the pre-election period, failed to meet a number of OSCE commitments, in particular during the vote count and tabulation process.
2. In this connection, the European Union would like to draw the attention to the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report, issued on the 1st of February 2006, and invites the Azerbaijani Government to address seriously and follow up on the recommendations contained in the Report in order to improve and to bring the conduct of Azerbaijani elections in line with OSCE commitments. As the OSCE/ODIHR has stated, it remains ready to support the efforts of the authorities and civil society of Azerbaijan to meet its obligations as an OSCE participating State.

The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, EFTA countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area align themselves with this declaration.

*Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continues to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process