



**INTERNATIONAL OBSERVATION MISSION OF THE
PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF TURKIC-SPEAKING COUNTRIES
Early Presidential Elections, Republic of Azerbaijan
11 April, 2018**

STATEMENT

Following the invitation from the Parliament of Azerbaijan, the International Observation Mission (*hereinafter referred to as the Mission*) of the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic Speaking Countries (TURKPA) conducted a short-term monitoring of the Early Presidential Elections in Azerbaijan on 11 April 2018. The Mission is comprised of the members of parliaments of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey and diplomatic staff of the TURKPA Secretariat.

The Mission's programme included the meetings with the Chairman of the Milli Mejlis Mr. Ogtay Asadov, the Deputy Foreign Minister Mr. Mahmud Mammad-Guliyev and Chairman of the Central Election Commission of Azerbaijan Mr. Mezhahir Panahov, and observation of the voting process on the election day.

Presidential elections are primarily regulated by the Constitution and the Election Code. The Constitution guarantees universal, equal and direct suffrage by secret ballot. Other legislation related to parts of electoral process includes the Law on Mass Media, the Law on Mass Events, relevant provisions of the Criminal Code, the Code of Administrative Offences, the Civil Procedure Code and resolutions of the Central Election Commission. Azerbaijan is a party to major international and regional instruments related to the holding of democratic elections.

During the meeting with the Chairman of CEC Mr. Mazahir Panahov, the Mission members were informed on preparations for the elections that included elaboration of rules and regulations, organization of trainings for lower-level commissions and law-enforcement bodies, registration of voters and candidates and review of complaints. The Chairman of CEC also informed that there are 5,2 million registered voters and all voters are able to check their registration at any time through the CEC web-site, by telephone or in person at the Precinct Election Commissions. The Chairman of CEC also gave an information on the opening of

40 polling stations at the diplomatic missions of Azerbaijan in foreign countries that enable Azerbaijani citizens living abroad to use their voting rights.

The CEC registered eight presidential candidates and sixth of them represent different parties, as the two are self-nominated.

For the first time, the Mission's members visited polling stations outside the capital city Baku, having observed the voting process in Sumgait (third largest city of Azerbaijan) and Khirdalan cities. In Sumgait, observers visited polling stations №1, №2, №12, №13 and №5 of the 44 Sumgait-Khizi Election Constituency and polling stations №9, №10, №22 of the 42 Sumgait Election Constituency. In Khirdalan and Baku cities, the mission visited polling stations №4, №5 and №14 of the Absheron Election Constituency and polling station №20 of the 23 Nasimi-Sabail Elections Constituency.

The Mission had an opportunity to monitor the casting of votes, to talk to voters and polling stations' officials. According to the information of the Central Election Commission, voter turnout was 74,30%¹. The Mission also held meetings with the heads of local executive bodies of Sumgait and Khirdalan cities and was given an information as regards the measures on preparations for elections.

The mission has not observed any significant violations or deviations from the legal framework and election procedure was administered in conformity with the national legislation of Azerbaijan and its international commitments. The Mission noticed that, as in previous elections, all the bodies of election administration were well-resourced and professionally prepared for conduct of elections. This aspect is exemplified by the installation of web-cameras at 1000 polling stations and creation of necessary conditions for citizens with physical disabilities.

All the legal and logistical conditions were provided for international observation of elections in Azerbaijan. The Mission followed the objectivity, justness, transparency and impartiality principles confirmed by the relevant international instruments.

The Mission concludes that the early presidential elections in the Republic of Azerbaijan of 11 April 2018 were held in compliance with the national legislation of Azerbaijan and international election standards.

¹ This figure on the voter turnout has been officially declared afterwards by CEC