INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS MISSION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF TURKIC-SPEAKING COUNTRIES

Referendum on amendments into the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey
16 April, 2017

STATEMENT

On the invitation of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey the TURKPA International Observers Mission conducted a short-term monitoring of the Referendum on the amendments into the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey held on 16 April 2017. The mission was comprised of members of the parliaments of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

The Milli Mejlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan was represented by MPs Mr. Ahliman AMIRASLANOV and Mr. Aghalar VALIYEV, the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan was represented by Senator Mr. Manap KUBENOV and member of Majilis (Lower House) Mr. Bekbolat TILEUKHAN, Joghorku Kenesh of the Kyrgyz Republic – by MP Mr. Kaldarbek BAIMURATOV.

The Law No. 6771 on the Amendments into the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, which was adopted by the Grand National Assembly of the Republic of Turkey on 21.01.2017 served as the basis for the current referendum. Within the framework of this law the High Electoral Board on February 11, 2017 issued a decision №74 to hold a constitutional referendum on April 16, 2017.

The overall legal framework for the conduct of referendum is the same as for parliamentary elections. Elections are primarily regulated by the Constitution, the Law on Basic Provisions on Elections and Voters Registers, the Law on Parliamentary Elections, the Law on Political Parties, regulations and decisions of the Supreme Board of Elections.

Within the framework of its work TURKPA observers held meeting with the Chairman of the Supreme Board of Elections Mr. Saadi Güven, who informed that within the country 55 million and abroad 3 million citizens of Turkey had been registered to cast their votes at the referendum. He viewed that the voters’
turn-out at the referendum should be not less than 80%. He noted that abroad polling had been organized in 57 countries.

The TurkPA delegation also held meetings with the leaders of parliamentary factions of ruling Justice and Development Party (Deputy Chair of the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) Group Mr. Mustafa Elitaş) and main opposition Republican People’s Party (Deputy Chair of the Republican People’s Party (CHP) Group Mr. Levent Gök). TurkPA observers were given detailed information as regards the measures taken on preparation for the referendum. At the meetings TurkPA MPs unanimously said that whatever the outcome of the referendum other brotherly countries wish Turkey peace and prosperity.

TURKPA mission has had the opportunity to monitor the voting process at all stages. Polling stations on voting day were open from 8:00 until 17:00. According to the information of the Supreme Board of Elections, voter turnout was 85.5%. The proposed changes into the country’s constitution were supported by the 51.4% of the voters. Members of the mission visited polling stations in the Çankaya and Etimesgut districts of Ankara. The observers monitored vote cast, talked to voters and polling officials and also observed the vote counting. During the course of its work the monitoring group met the officials and representatives of political and public organizations.

All the logistical conditions were provided for TurkPA monitoring mission. The TurkPA observers abided by the objectivity, justness, transparency and impartiality principles enshrined in the Code of Conduct for International Observers approved in 2005 by the United Nations Organization, as well as other in other international legal instruments.

The mission has not observed violations or deviations that could somehow affect the referendum outcomes and voting procedure was administered in conformity with national legislation of Turkey and international norms.

TURKPA International Observers Mission concludes that Referendum on the Amendments into the Constitution in the Republic of Turkey was held in compliance with the national legislation of Turkey and international standards.

17 April 2017, Ankara