



**INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS MISSION OF THE
PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF TURKIC-SPEAKING COUNTRIES
Referendum on Changes to the Constitution, Republic of Azerbaijan
26 September, 2016**

STATEMENT

The TURKPA International Observers Mission conducted a short-term monitoring of the Referendum on Changes to the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan held on 26 September 2016. The mission has been comprised of members of the parliaments of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey.

The mission was led by Mr. Nurlan Dulatbekov, member of Mazhilis of the Parliament of Kazakhstan and included Mr. Aliiarbek Abzhaliyev, member of Jogorku Kenesh of Kyrgyzstan, Mr. Haluk İpek and Mr. Erkan Aydın, members of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey.

Conduct of referendum is primarily regulated by the Constitution, Election Code and Law on Referendum. The regulatory framework also includes the Law on Freedom of Assembly, the Law on Radio and Television Broadcasting, the Law on Political Parties, the Law on Non-Governmental Organizations, relevant provisions of the Criminal Code, the Code of Administrative Procedures and the Code of Administrative Offences, as well as regulations of the Central Election Commission (CEC).

Observers got acquainted with the measures taken on preparation for the referendum. According to the information of the Central Election Commission, about 5,7 million citizens of Azerbaijan are registered to vote. The Central Election Commission has registered three campaigning groups representing several political parties.

Referendum is administered by a three-level structure consisting of the Central Election Commission (CEC), Constituency Election Commissions and Precinct Election Commissions (PECs) with total number of 5627 PECs.

The observers' mission views technical and procedural aspects as well organized, including adoption of activity calendar, voter registration and preparation of training materials for the members of election commissions.

Prior to the day of referendum the observers' mission visited several polling stations in Baku to get acquainted with preparation for the vote casting. TURKPA mission has had the opportunity to monitor a voting process at all stages. Polling stations on voting day were open from 8:00 until 19:00. According to the information of the Central Election Commission, voter turnout was 69,7%.

Members of the mission visited polling stations of the Nizami and Sabayil Constituency Election Commissions in Baku. The observers monitored vote cast, having talked to voters and polling officials. During the course of its work the monitoring group met the officials and representatives of political and public organizations.

All the legal and logistical conditions were provided for international observation of referendum in Azerbaijan. The 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 any significant violations or deviations that could somehow affect the referendum outcomes and voting procedure was administered in conformity with national legislation of Azerbaijan and international norms. Certain technical shortcomings can be characterised as isolated cases and could not have any significant impact on the entire voting process.

TURKPA International Observers Mission concludes that Referendum on the Changes to the Constitution in the Republic of Azerbaijan was held in compliance with the national legislation of Azerbaijan and international standards.

On behalf of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan:

Head of the International Observers Mission of the
Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-Speaking Countries,
Member of Majilis ((Lower House)

Nurlan
DULATBEKOV

On behalf of the Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic:

Member of Jogorku Kenesh

Aliiarbek ABZHALIYEV

On behalf of the Parliament of the Republic of Turkey:

Member of the Grand National Assembly

Haluk IPEK

Member of the Grand National Assembly

Erkan AYDIN

27 September 2016, Baku