



United States Mission to the OSCE

Reaction to Presidential Decree on Electoral Reform in Azerbaijan

As delivered by Ambassador Stephan M. Minikes
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
May 19, 2005

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States welcomes the decree issued on May 12th by Azerbaijan's President Aliyev that commits the government to implement electoral reform.

The decree includes eleven provisions by which President Aliyev undertakes to ensure that elections meet international democratic standards.

Of course, Mr. Chairman, more remains to be done. And the proof will be, as always, in the implementation. The full realization of every provision in the decree has the potential to contribute to a fully free, fair and transparent parliamentary election this November.

The United States stands ready to assist the Azerbaijani government in any way necessary to implement these and other much-needed reforms.

We are also happy to hear that ODIHR will send a Needs-Assessment Mission to Azerbaijan early next month, in order to prepare for the election observation mission that we hope will follow. We hope Azerbaijan will issue the formal invitation for election observers as soon as possible so that they can properly and appropriately begin their work.

All of this, Mr. Chairman, is good news and we congratulate President Aliyev for his timely commitments to democratization in Azerbaijan.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.