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Parliamentary By-Elections

On May 13, 2006, elections to the Milli Majlis (Parliament) of Azerbaijan were re-run in the ten constituencies where results were annulled in the 2005 November elections. 165 registered representatives from foreign observation missions monitored the elections, of which 124 candidates ran for the contested ten seats. 60 candidates were independent, 17 did not indicate their party affiliation, 8 were members of ruling party Yeni Azerbaijan, 10 were members of opposition Musavat, 5 - Azerbaijan National Party, 5 - the Popular Front of United Azerbaijan, 3 - Umid, 3 – the Communist Party, and 3 - Adalat.

On May 14, Mr. Leo Platvoet, head of the 20 member ad-hoc Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe that monitored the by-elections in Azerbaijan said that, the conduct of the May 13 by-elections was much better than that of the main election in November, 2005. Mr. Platvoet noted that the re-election was a step forward toward meeting international norms. The ad hoc Committee regretted the decision of certain opposition parties to boycott the elections and not to field candidates.

The OSCE/ODIHR mission found that while the repeat election process reflected some improvements, such as an inclusive candidate registration, a largely unimpeded campaign, and increased opportunities for participation of domestic observers, there were several issues of concern.

Other foreign observation missions released statements of affirmation following the May 13 re-run elections. Foreign observers from Estonia, Sweden, Bulgaria, Germany and Latvia assessed and praised the conduct of by-elections.

The Monitoring Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) is planning to discuss the post election situation in Azerbaijan on May 19.