



United States Mission to the OSCE

Reply to Azerbaijan on ODIHR's Election Observation Mandate

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
October 22, 2015

The United States deeply regrets that Azerbaijan has decided once again to raise this issue. The director of ODIHR has not violated his mandate. Azerbaijan has regrettably sought to interfere with and restrict ODIHR in the exercise of its mandate, and this has resulted in the regrettable situation where the kind of credible and robust election observation offered by ODIHR and the OSCE/PA and jointly delivered in the past for Azerbaijan and its citizens, could not happen for the upcoming parliamentary elections.

Azerbaijan was mistaken in obstructing ODIHR. I understand that Azerbaijan would now like a kind of special arrangement with ODIHR. While the US appreciates Azerbaijan's engagement with ODIHR and encourages it going forward, we also understand – and I think that all participating States should understand – that part of the objective application of the methodology, the objective application of any methodology, is precisely to resist the possibility of special arrangements.

Therefore, this is not a decision that is made with respect to Azerbaijan in particular, but a decision to uphold the objectivity and independence of ODIHR in the exercise of its mandate and the application of its time-tested methodology.

Thank you, Madam Chair.