Turan Information Agency (Azerbaijan)

7 October 2013

Today a delegation of seven Members of European Parliament (MEPs) will arrive in Baku to start their election observation mission, together with more than 300 international observers from different international organisations, which will monitor the 9 October presidential elections in Azerbaijan.

According a press release of the EU mission to Baku, the aim of the MEPs' mission is to assess whether the 2013 presidential elections in Azerbaijan are conducted according to the country's international commitments and national laws. MEPs' work will be guided by international standards and criteria, as defined by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR), and grounded in fundamental civil and political rights.

On 7-8 October MEPs will meet the Azerbaijani electoral authorities, international election observation organisations, presidential candidates, representatives of NGOs and analysts.

On Wednesday, 9 October, the day of the election, MEPs will observe the elections in the capital Baku and other cities. They will visit polling stations, watch the voting process and observe the opening of the ballot boxes and counting of votes.

After discussions, a joint preliminary statement on the findings of the international observation mission will be made public in a press conference which will be held on Thursday, 10 October in Baku, Hyatt Regency Hotel, 14.30 (Baku time)..

Delegation members come from different political groups which are represented in European Parliament:

Mr Pino ARLACCHI, Italy, S&D, Head of Delegation
Mr Filip KACZMAREK, Poland, EPP
Mr Joachim ZELLER, Germany, EPP
Mr Evgeni KIRILOV, Bulgaria, S&D
Ms Norica NICOLAI, Romania, ALDE
Mr Milan CABRNOCH Czech Republic, ECR
Mr Fiorello PROVERA, Italy, EFD

The aim of EP election observations is to strengthen the legitimacy of national electoral processes, increase public confidence in elections, avoid electoral fraud, better protect human rights and contribute to conflict solution. The election observation is a democracy support tool which is used by the European Parliament as part of its mission to promote democracy and human rights worldwide, especially in the EU's closest neighbourhood. Members of the European Parliament who have been democratically elected themselves provide a particular political perspective, expertise and experience in election observation. Over the years, the EP

has observed more than 100 elections worldwide.

According to the rules of EP election observation missions, members have to refrain from any public comments on the organization of the elections, the candidates or political issues before the press conference at which the preliminary statement is issued.

The Head of the European Parliament election observation delegation — Mr Pino Arlacchi — speaks on behalf of the delegation.

A joint press conference where Mr Arlacchi together with other international observers will present the preliminary post-election statement, will be held on 10 October in Baku, Hyatt Regency Hotel, 14.30 (Baku time). -0-