

Secretariat of the Steering Committee
Civil Society Forum
Rue de la Loi 42
1040 Brussels
Belgium

Ranko Krivokapic

President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly
Tordenskjoldgade
1055 Copenhagen
Denmark

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Dear Sir,

Please let me congratulate you on your election in Istanbul to be the speaker of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA) and to wish you every success during your term in office.

I am sure that you are aware that this autumn will see presidential elections in two Eastern Partnership states: Azerbaijan on October 16 and Georgia on October 27. The elections will be monitored by teams of local and international observers including the highly professional Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODiHR) organization as well as observers from the OSCE PA as well as the European Parliament (EP), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE).

Past practice has shown that many elections in EaP tend to fall short of European standards and the quality, professionalism and integrity of the observer teams play a key role in the assessment of their conduct by the authorities of the countries involved.

Non-governmental organisations specializing in election monitoring in both Azerbaijan and Georgia will be looking to international observers and especially to teams from the various parliamentary assemblies for a fair assessment of the elections in their countries. Should this not happen, then the credibility of these assemblies will fall in their eyes and support for democratic practice in these countries will necessarily be eroded. This would deal a major blow to the principle of free and fair elections which is the key element of the reform process in the EaP countries.

It is important that the observer teams selected for the autumn elections in Azerbaijan and Georgia should be composed of politicians of the highest standards of honesty and fairness and who are courageous enough to report on what they see and what they are told of the conduct of elections by reliable local observers.

Later this autumn OSCE PA will be choosing representatives who will go to Azerbaijan and Georgia. I would ask you, as the person responsible for the selection of these teams, to remember that the performance of the people who are chosen to observe elections will shape the image of Europe's democratic institutions in the eyes of Eastern Partnership societies. You should also take note that observers from these institutions will themselves be observed by the voters in these societies. Those choosing the election observers bear a heavy responsibility for the choice they make.

Yours sincerely,

Krzysztof Bobinski

Co-chair, Steering Committee, Civil Society Forum of the Eastern Partnership